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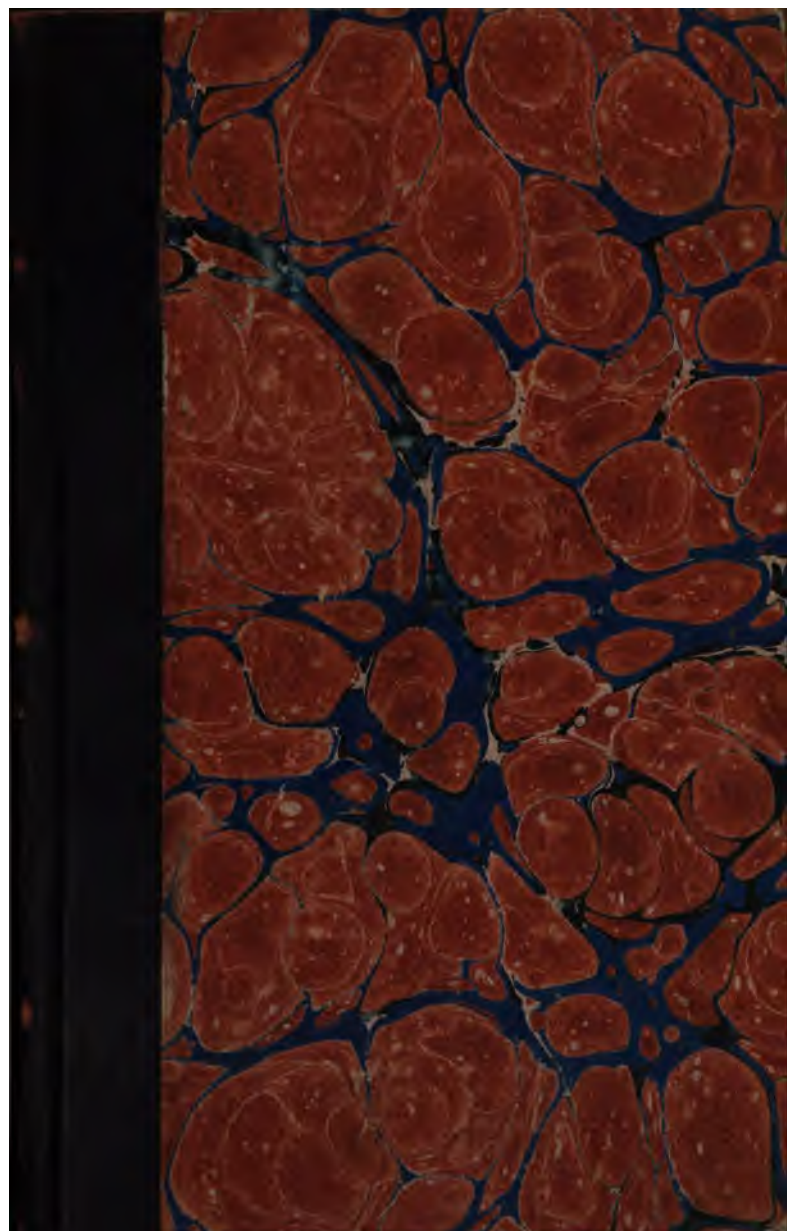
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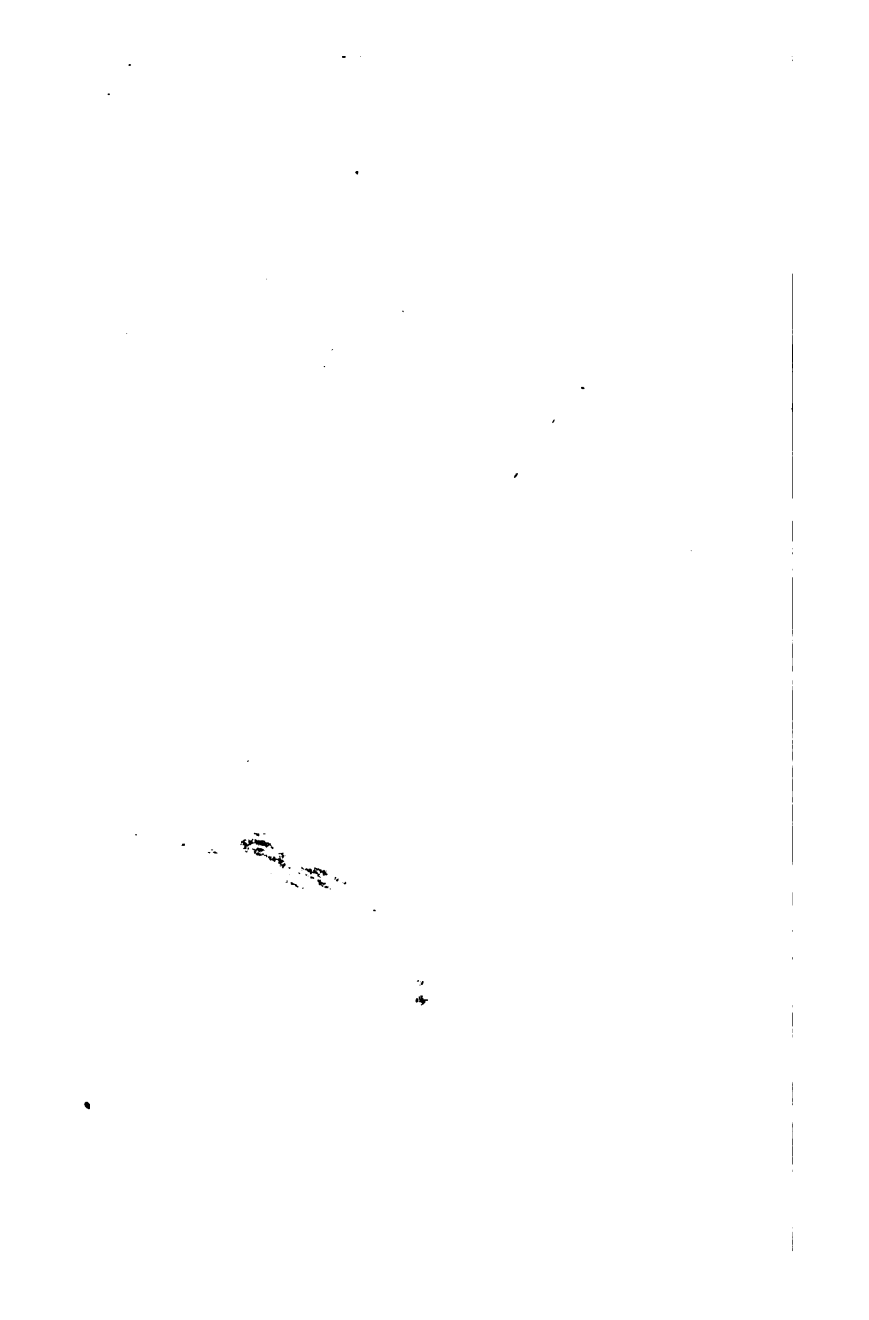






*Dr. H. H. H.*

**EIGHT LECTURES**  
**ON**  
**FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD.**



**EIGHT LECTURES**  
**ON**  
**FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD.**

**BY**  
**JOHN SANDFORD, B.A.**

**OF BALLIOL COLLEGE, OXFORD ;**  
**MINISTER OF LONG ACRE CHAPEL, LONDON ;**  
**CHAPLAIN TO THE MOST NOBLE THE MARQUIS OF QUEENSBERRY ;**  
**AND**  
**FORMERLY VICAR OF CHILLINGHAM, NORTHUMBERLAND.**

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This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and  
Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.—JOHN xvii. 3.

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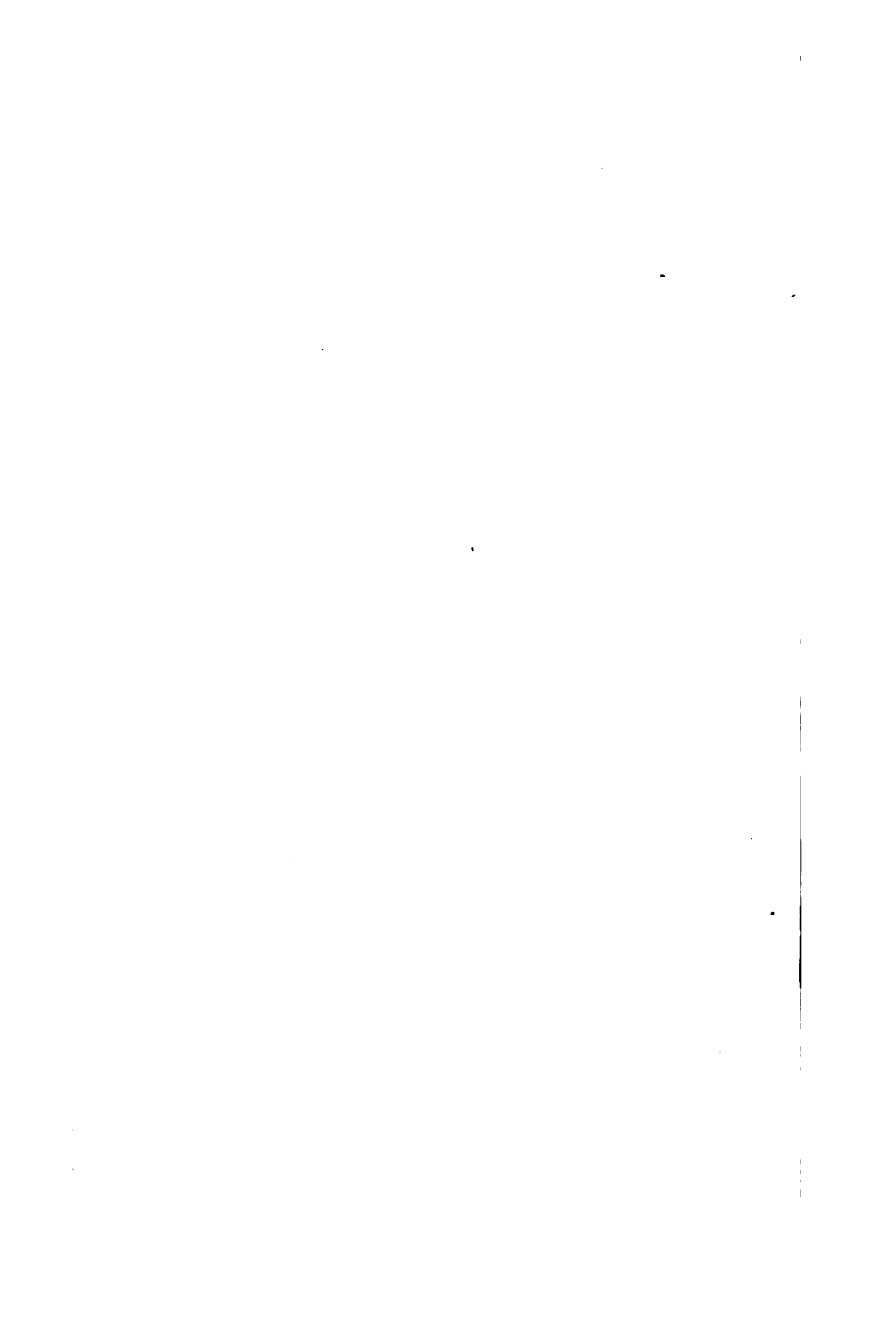
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TO  
THE CONGREGATION  
OF  
LONG ACRE CHAPEL, LONDON,  
*These Lectures,*  
PRINTED AT THEIR REQUEST,  
ARE  
RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY  
INSCRIBED.



TO  
THE CONGREGATION  
OF  
**Long Acre Chapel.**

---

MY BELOVED BRETHREN,

IN presenting you with this little volume, I am influenced, both by a respect for your wishes, and by an anxious desire to retain in your recollection the all important subject of which it treats.

I offer no apology for any imperfections which a fastidious eye may detect in the following pages. The duties of my charge leave no

leisure for finished composition, even were such, with you, an object of consideration. But I know that my ministrations are prized by you, just in proportion as they convey the sentiments of my own heart, and speak directly to your's.

It is my happiness to believe that many of you are personally acquainted with that blessed fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, to which I have drawn your attention. Still I cannot but feel that, of a mixed congregation, some, into whose hands this book will come, are yet in practical ignorance of the subject on which it speaks. Oh! may such be brought to see the state in which they lie; and be led, in the exercise of saving faith, to the knowledge of what can alone give peace in this world, or fit the soul for the scenes of eternity.

My little book comes to you at an interesting period: just as the old year is departing, and

the new year about to commence its chequered and eventful course. At such a moment must we not all exclaim, it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not? And while we are all abased in a sense of our unworthiness, ought we not to feel, that bye-gone blessings constrain us to increased confidence in God?

May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ forgive us all that is past, and enable us to live more under a sense of his eye, and with a view to his glory, than we have ever yet done! And may he unite us all in such close and sanctifying bonds with himself,—that whether we be preserved to the close of another year, or be removed during its course,—in life or death, we may be the Lord's!

May the new year open upon you, my beloved friends, in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace!

Accept my heart-felt wishes for your continued and increasing happiness, and believe me to be,

With respect and affection,

Your attached friend and pastor,

JOHN SANDFORD.

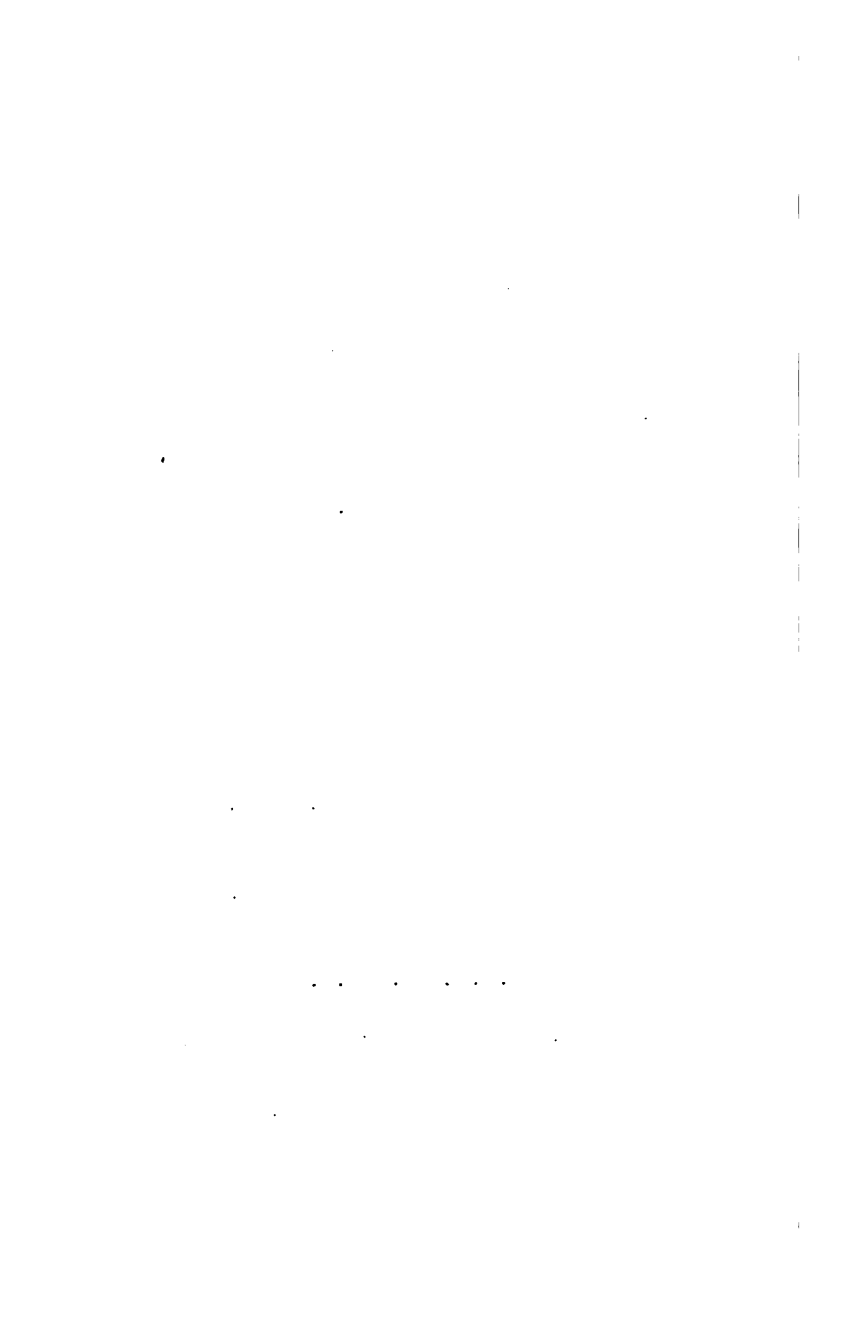
*London, Dec. 31, 1834.*

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# LECTURES.

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## LECTURE I.

*And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ.—I JOHN i. 3.*

EVERY one, I think, must be struck with the similarity between the context from which these words are taken and the opening verses of the Gospel of St. John. There is in both the same abrupt introduction of the Lord Jesus Christ, as if the apostle's heart was so full of this one subject, that he was compelled to plunge into it at once, without any preface,—as if, in his impatience to divulge the mystery of the incarnation, he could not linger for a moment on the threshold of the doctrine. In both there is the same testimony to the eternity and deity of the Son, and to his co-equality with

the Father; and in both the same holding forth and glorifying of him, as the life and the light of men.

St. John, indeed, writes as one who had been an ear and eye witness of the wonders he relates, might be expected to do. His is just the eager and emphatic announcement which we should anticipate from a man, who had been admitted into intimate and daily intercourse with the Son of God,—who had gone in and out with him during the whole term of his public ministry,—and to whom it had been divulged, that the personage with whom he had been thus familiarly associated,—whose private as well as public instructions he had so often shared,—whom he had attended in the dwelling and on the journey, in the city, and the wilderness, on the mount, and in the garden; whose hand he had so often pressed,—on whose bosom he had reclined; whom he had seen, heard, and handled; whom he had beheld expire upon the cross, and afterwards, in restored animation, move about a living and breathing man, with nothing to indicate his having tasted death, but the print of the nails and the

Roman spear—that he, the son of the carpenter, the crucified Jesus of Nazareth, was the very and eternal God who made the world. We should naturally have expected that a person thus circumstanced, with his mind full of this amazing fact, and in his anxiety to communicate it to others, would at once break forth into the address employed by St. John. “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life. For the life was manifest, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. That which we have seen, and heard, declare we unto you.” Just as St. Peter writes, “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye witnesses of his majesty.” Of whom could we expect that the beloved disciple would speak, but of the master who loved him; or what fact could we expect to flow so readily from his lips as that of the

union of the divine and human nature in the person of Emmanuel.

It was once said by an individual whose life had been passed in exciting and agitating scenes, when speaking of matters that deeply interested him,—were I to die this moment, the subject of which I speak would be found stamped on my heart. And we have all read the story of the soldier, who, hastening from a field of battle where his countrymen were victorious, had only strength, when he reached the capital, to exclaim, Rejoice, we triumph! when he dropped down and expired. Now we should conceive that could the Evangelist's heart have been exposed, the deity of the Son, and the work he had accomplished, would have been found inscribed there—or had he, in the discharge of his commission to a world of sinners, had only time for a single sentence, he would have delivered himself of the text and the verses which precede it. He would have felt that the tidings they conveyed was the only message which could convert the heart,—that it was only when Jesus was recognised as the God-Man, mighty to save, that the soul could

be dispossessed of its rebellion, and drawn into kindly and holy fellowship with the Father.

This, then, was the object for which St. John and all the apostles of Christ's truth preached and laboured; and this was the object for which the divine interposition which they made known was achieved. It was that our guilty and apostate race might be won from sin and misery, and introduced into fellowship with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ. For this is the end of the economy of grace. If you ask St. Paul the object of his embassy, he will tell you, to pray sinners in Christ's stead to be reconciled unto God. If you ask St. Peter, he will tell you, that for this were given the exceeding great and precious promises of the Gospel, that by them we might be partakers of the divine nature. If you ask Christ himself, he will tell you, that the object for which he lived and died, and which he bears unceasingly on his heart, is this, that his people may be all one, as God is in him, and he in God, so that we may be all one in him and the Father:—He in us, and the Father in him, that we may be made perfect in one. And there-

fore, in answer to the inquiry what is religion—what is the end you have in view in preaching—what is it that is essential to salvation?—we simply reply, the object God has in view in his revelation of grace,—the aim of all our preaching, the indispensable qualification for Heaven is, that you should have fellowship with the Father, that you should be on friendly and filial terms with him, that you should be able to address him from the ground of your hearts as Abba Father. As men who know and prize the power of religion in the soul, our language, in every address, must be that of St. John. “That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us;” and where our message awakes a kindred response in your bosoms, you will rejoin, yea, “truly, our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”

It is evident that all that the soul needs, in order to its happiness and ultimate salvation, is such recovered holiness as is implied in the term fellowship with the Father. And, under this impression, it will be my anxious endeavour to unfold this all-important subject in this and a

few subsequent discourses; and I pray the Father of lights and God of all illumination, that he will give me grace to hold forth his own very and eternal truth, and you docile and sanctified hearts to profit by the same.

I shall proceed to consider, by God's permission, and with a reliance on his aid and blessing,—

I. What that fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ is, to which we are called.

II. How this fellowship is to be obtained and enjoyed.

III. How it is to be cherished and improved.

I trust, that in following out and filling up this sketch, I shall be enabled, without wearying the attention, to lay before you such a summary of Christian faith and practice as may furnish you with a manual or vade mecum to assist you in your pilgrimage to Zion.

I. I proceed, first, to consider what is meant by that fellowship, to which, as hearers of the gospel of grace, we are all called. The apostle describes it as a fellowship with the Father and with the Lord Jesus Christ. "Truly," saith he, "our fellowship is with the Father, and



with his Son Jesus Christ." It is a fellowship with the Father, into which we are introduced through the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by the operation and indwelling of the Holy Ghost. It is a fellowship involving acquaintance and oneness with each and every person of the Blessed Trinity; a participation in the terms of the apostolic benediction, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Ghost." It is thus a state of the most exalted happiness and glory of which the immortal soul is capable. And yet it is one to which every hearer of the gospel of grace is individually invited, and of which every real child of the covenant is actually a partaker. In my attempt to unfold this subject it will facilitate our inquiry and aid the memory if I classify the fellowship as—

1. A fellowship in nature.
2. A fellowship in interest and occupation.
3. A fellowship in suffering and glory.

In the first place, then, it is a fellowship in nature. And this, while it is a fact which should tend to simplify our idea of religion,

and shew us its spirituality,—that the kingdom of God is not in word or in form, but in power and the Holy Ghost, is a conclusion to which a very slight consideration should be sufficient to bring us. The declaration of our Lord himself is express and unequivocal. “Except,” said he, “a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” “How,” inquireth Job by the Spirit, “can two dwell together except they be agreed.” “What fellowship,” asketh Paul, “has righteousness with unrighteousness; what communion hath light with darkness.” It is clear that as a difference in nature is the ground of the controversy between God and man, the difference must be removed before they can be at one together, that the nature of the creature must be assimilated to that of God, in order that the former may be saved. Therefore it is, that the work of grace is ever described as a change of nature—that the convert is distinctly said to be renewed in the spirit of his mind,—to have put off the old man which is corrupt, and to have put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness. Therefore it is, that as physicians of your souls

we must not slightly heal your hurt, that as builders for eternity we must not daub the wall with untempered mortar, that as ambassadors for God we must not speak smooth things, but call you to entire and radical conversion,—and instead of suffering you to rest in forms and superficial impressions, and a mere change of doctrine or outer reformation of conduct, must tell you in the emphatic language of inspiration, that unless you be born again, and become as little children, and be made new creatures, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of God.

The doctrine of spiritual renovation indeed lies at the very threshold of religion, and without it there can be no participation in the fellowship to which the gospel invites us. Perhaps something of the offence inseparably connected with the doctrine might be avoided, if we were to argue with the formalist and self-righteous person in this fashion. “What is it you purpose to yourself by these acts of devotion, and this alms-giving to the poor, and this observance of the letter of the commandment, on which you appear to rest. We do not say

that these things are useless or unimportant: on the contrary, they are most valuable and essential as means, and without an attention to them the christian life cannot be maintained. But what do you purpose to yourself by them? Do you mean them as a substitute for that spirituality of mind for which God asks—as a means of establishing a claim on heaven—as a service by which you may work out for yourself a right and title to a crown of glory? Or do you view them as acceptable indeed to God, when incensed in the perfume of your Saviour's merits, but as accessory to your salvation only as they are subservient to the attainment of a character, which is not to entitle you to heaven, but to qualify you for its scenes? Do you not see that it is not an act, or a series of acts, however costly or laborious, but the frame of mind of which the act may be indicative, or promotive, which is to introduce you to heaven; in fact, that it is not a title, if we may so express ourselves, but a qualification which you are to be set on working out? Do you not see that it is quite possible for a man's heart to remain unchanged,—for him to be proud, and covetous,

and worldly, and unchaste, all the time that he is multiplying the outer acts of devotion, practising austerities, giving large gifts to the church or to the poor ; in a word, that notwithstanding all this expensive and elaborate form of godliness, he may all the time be an utter stranger to its power ? And in this case what serve the outer acts :—the man must be lost in spite of them ; for his heart may be all the time at variance with God, and his temper and affections quite uncongenial with the society and enjoyments of heaven. And under such circumstances it is surely needless to urge that heaven would not be a place of happiness or a fitting habitation. So that religion, it is obvious, does nothing for the soul, unless it be a means of sanctifying its disposition and affections, and introducing it into fellowship with God by assimilating it to his nature.”

Now, of course, my argument gathers strength, if, instead of the formalist it is brought to bear on a careless and open evil liver, whose only hope in the anticipation of hereafter, is founded on a vague idea of God’s mercy. Granting, I say, this attribute of mercy ; and oh ! it is not

for us to dispute, or limit a perfection to which we owe, the holiest among us, that we are out of hell. Granting this glorious attribute of mercy, God's mercy is not displayed in saving you in sin, but in delivering you from a state incompatible with salvation, and which contains a moral hell in its very nature. Where, I ask, is your fitness for heaven, 'your capacity to breath its atmosphere, or behold unblasted its dazzling glories? Where is your sympathy for those holy enjoyments to which you imagine a mere effort of divine benignity might translate you? Where is your conformity with that being, whom to know is everlasting life, and with whom, if you go to heaven, you must spend everlasting ages? Oh! do you not see, that however a hope of being saved, unchanged and unsanctified, may deceive you; yet that when brought into contact with the word of God, or even viewed in the mere light of reason, it is utterly false and delusive? Do you not see that there can be no salvation without fellowship with God, and no such fellowship without a similitude of nature?

When man enjoyed communion with God in

Eden, it was because he wore, unsullied, his Maker's image; the moment the likeness was disfigured the communion ceased, and man was driven an outcast and an alien from Paradise. And it is only on the ground of the likeness being recovered that the fellowship can be restored. If we would walk with God, on a footing of restored friendship, we must be like him. As St. John writes: "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk even as he walked. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth."

Would you, then, my brethren, have hope in death, and when you close your eyes upon this world, would you look to spend eternity with God? Oh! do you not see, that in order to do so you must be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the pollutions of the world? Do you not admit, that to anticipate heaven without any preparation for its service and enjoyments,—to expect to dwell with God for ever, without any love for Him, without any sympathy with Him, without any resemblance to Him, must be the most visionary thing in nature, the very height

of folly and presumption ? Well, then, have you such resemblance to God, such fellowship with Him this day, as will justify you in looking to heaven as your home, as would capacitate you for its holy pleasures and occupations, as would make you a suitable occupant of a place, in which you would be associated for ever with a Holy God, with holy angels, with the spirits of just men made perfect ? In a word, have you any fellowship with God's nature ?

Now, in order to answer this inquiry satisfactorily, you must have been regenerate, renewed in the spirit of your minds, become new creatures. As the children of the fallen Adam, you can have no such fellowship. In order to enjoy it you must have undergone a spiritual change, been subjected to a transforming power, been made the children of God by the baptism of the new birth. That is, you must have come in deep humiliation and self-abhorrence to the Saviour ; and received by faith, through the operation of the Spirit, out of Christ's fulness, those spiritual tempers and affections which he alone can give. For it is they alone who, with open face, behold in Jesus Christ, as in a glass, the



glory of God, that are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.

2. The need of such spiritual change as I am advocating will be still further apparent, if we consider, in the second place, that the Christian's fellowship with God implies a communion with Him in interest and pursuit. In virtue of the fellowship with the Father, into which the child of God is admitted, implying a change of nature, his objects and occupations, as far as is possible for a creature, become henceforth identified with those of God. He comes to view things in a certain sense, with God's eye; and as a joint heir with Christ, to be chiefly affected and engaged with congenial subjects. And thus it is, that his outer conduct, being only a reflection of his inner frame of mind, becomes conformed to the Divine pattern, so that, as I quoted before from St. John, he comes to live as God in the world. The new state of existence into which he has been introduced brings along with it a new world of interests and emotions, and these of course in their turn induce an altered outer walk. In proportion as the

Christian is much in communion with God, lives, if I may so speak, much in the presence chamber of the Eternal, contemplating his perfections, and listening to the awful utterances of his voice, and inhaling the fragrance of the heavenly atmosphere, he will imbibe the tastes, and contract the hues of heaven. And in the same proportion will he be interested in what engages the attention, and constitutes the work of God and Godlike beings, so that he will be eager to start forward on heavenly errands, and to emulate in his subordinate sphere the employments of celestial intelligences. Sympathizing with God in his compassion for the sinful and his anxiety for their conversion, he will desire to be himself employed in the embassy of reconciliation, and in the spirit which he has drunk in, while waiting at the mercy-seat, and contemplating a God of love, he will seek to diffuse peace, as well as to publish it, and to assuage the griefs, and wipe the tears, and minister to the wants of suffering humanity. He will promote God's cause, not merely by the reflection of his brightness, which he has contracted by closet communion with him,

but by efforts and contrivances suggested by his sympathy with what is good and heaven-like, and his interest in its triumphs. In short, he will be a fellow-worker with God, because he has a fellow-feeling, and a fellow interest with him.

Now it is easy for you, beloved brethren, to ask yourselves to-day, whether you thus feel, and thus act. In the first place, have you ever so contemplated God's lovely and fatherly character in redemption, that you have been brought to entertain towards him filial and confiding sentiments? Without this trust in God and love to him, which are implied in saving faith, you can have no communion with God at all.

Then, secondly, have you any such participation in the Divine nature, as draws you to God as the supreme object of affection, as makes you comfortable and happy in thoughts of him, as makes you anticipate, with joy and longing, an intercourse with him through all eternity? Are you, in any measure, cast into the mould of the Divine character, so that your tastes and affections sweetly harmonize with God's, so that the

requirements of the law of God are not grating to you, so that you find your pleasure in his service, so that his words and ordinances and behests are all delightful, and your desire is that his kingdom should be thoroughly established, and his will done on earth as it is in heaven? Can you say with David, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee:" or with Paul, "It is far better to depart and be with Christ:"—or with the above mentioned Psalmist of Israel, "Oh! how I love thy law. My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times?"

Are you interested in the promotion of God's cause, so that you feel that it is your own cause, that His glory is your glory, His trophies are your trophies, His inheritance your inheritance; and so that selfish objects and desires are all swallowed up in a paramount anxiety for the extension and stability of his kingdom? Hence, is the prevalence of wickedness and infidelity in the world around a cause of grief and heaviness to you: can you say again with David, "My eyes gush out with water because they keep

not thy law?" Were it within your ability, would you put down every infraction of God's law,—so that not an ungodly act should be committed, or an ungodly word uttered, or an ungodly thought breathed; so that even on the cups of God's house, and the bells of the houses, should be inscribed holiness to the Lord,—and every society, and every hearth, and every bosom in the world should present a foretaste, and a pattern of heaven?

And, in accordance with this state of mind, how far does your actual conduct and conversation exhibit this fellowship with the Father? Are you practically engaged in his service, aiding by your efforts and contributions the propagation of gospel truth and practical godliness in the world? Ask yourselves to-day—To what religious societies do I belong? In what benevolent undertakings am I engaged? Do I teach in, or contribute to any Sunday school? Do I collect for, or contribute to any missionary, or Dorcas, or benevolent society? What portion of my time and means do I devote to the glory of God and the good of my fellow-men? I profess to have fellowship with

God, how far am I endeavouring to extend this fellowship in my neighbourhood, or amongst my friends or associates, or in my own family? Do I ever visit or relieve the sick and indigent? Do I read and pray with my servants or dependants? Do I endeavour to bring sinners within the sound of the peace-speaking gospel? Am I much in prayer with God for the conversion of those that are without him in the world? In the present period of political excitement, when without are fightings, and within are fears, am I doing anything to promote amongst my countrymen that righteousness which exalteth a nation, and endeavouring by my prayers and example to avert national calamities and secure national blessings? Above all, how far am I cherishing fellowship with the Father and with the Lord Jesus Christ in my own heart? What is my state of private, personal, experimental religion? For, after all, brethren, this is the great point. Does the work of grace advance within me? Do I find corruption mortified, evil tempers pacified, worldly desires subdued? Is ambition curbed, pride allayed, lust extinguished, avarice, and indolence, and sen-

suality, and envy striven against and abated? Am I keeping my heart with all diligence, cleansing it as a temple for the triune God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to come and take up their habitation and dwell there? Oh! am I regular and importunate in prayer, diligent in the use of means, punctual in waiting upon God in the closet and the family, and the temple? Do I watch for the whispers of his voice, and seek to fan the spark he has kindled in my heart. And while I rest all my hope on a Redeemer, and know that it is only in his name I can knock at heaven's gate, and in his righteousness that I can tread its courts, do I long for and cherish the personal holiness to which Christ's work is only preparatory, which the Saviour died to purchase for me, and lives to maintain within me, without which I can have no fellowship with God on earth, and can never see his face in glory.

May God enable us, my brethren, to be faithful in applying and answering these inquiries;—so that if we now enjoy a measure of fellowship with him, we may be stirred up to

improve it, or that if we are yet strangers to this holy and happy communion, a desire after it may be engendered in our hearts. In a subsequent discourse, I may be permitted to finish the first section of my subject, and to shew how the child of God may be said to have fellowship with Christ in suffering and in glory. And now I commend you to Him who is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.





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belong to an inferior, and imply  
and endurance,—such as meek-  
ness, humility, and fortitude, of which  
the nature of his fleshly nature, became  
an example.

In this manner, there are some particulars  
of our fellowship with God can be ef-  
fected in the person of the Saviour; in  
we can be associated with God only so far  
as he is presented in the Son. I do not mean  
that we can have fellowship with the  
Father except through the mediation of the  
Son. No man cometh to the Father but by  
me, said Christ, and it is only so far as we have an  
access to a Mediator that we can be either

accepted by God's favour or conformed to his

But what I mean is, that though we  
have fellowship, in other points, with the  
Father through the Son, there are some par-  
ticulars in which we can have fellowship with  
the Son only in the Son. Thus we may be said to  
have fellowship with the Father, as I shewed  
yesterday, in nature, when we are renewed  
in mind, —and in interest and even occupa-  
tion, when we feel our happiness and glor-

## LECTURE II.

### ON FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST IN SUFFERING.

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*It is a faithful saying, For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him : If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.—2 TIM. ii. 11, 12.*

THERE are certain perfections of Deity which could be discovered to us only through the humanity of Jesus Christ. I might even affirm, that it is only when thus displayed, that any one of the attributes of God can be rightly understood by us ; so that of his justice and holiness, as well as of his faithfulness and love, we are to derive all our adequate impressions from the person and work of the incarnate Mediator. But, besides this, there are divine excellencies of which we could have formed no conception at all, had not God, by assuming human nature, and thus stooping in a measure to a level with the creature, capacitated himself to obey and suffer. I allude to those virtues which seem

properly to belong to an inferior, and imply subordination and endurance,—such as meekness, patience, humility, and fortitude, of which Jesus, in virtue of his fleshly nature, became the great exemplar.

In like manner, there are some particulars in which our fellowship with God can be effected only in the person of the Saviour; in which we can be associated with God only so far as he is represented in the Son. I do not mean to imply that we can have fellowship with the Father at all except through the mediation of the Son: “for no man cometh to the Father but by Jesus Christ,” and it is only so far as we have an interest in a Mediator that we can be either restored to God’s favour or conformed to his image. But what I mean is, that though we may have fellowship, in other points, with the Father *through* the Son, there are some particulars, in which we can have fellowship with him, only *in* the Son. Thus we may be said to have fellowship with the Father, as I shewed last Sunday, in nature, when we are renewed in our mind,—and in interest and even occupation, when we feel our happiness and glory

identified with his, and are personally engaged in his work. But we can be said to have fellowship with him in *suffering*, only as he is represented to us, and brought near to us, in the fleshly nature of Emmanuel. In the former case, when we talk of our fellowship with God, we mean that we have a kindred nature, and congenial interests and occupations with him as a spirit, in the pure essence of his divine character, and, in the latter case, we know that our fellowship can be only with that personification of Deity, who was clothed with our humanity, that he might be a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

With these prefatory observations I proceed to consider—

I. That the believer must have fellowship with Christ, in suffering, as in glory.

II. How far he can be said to have this fellowship in suffering.

III. For what end or purposes it is designed.

I. Now you will observe that the fellowship in suffering is essential as preparatory to the fellowship in glory. No suffering, no glory ;

no present cross, no future crown. The road to heaven is through the dark valley, and by the strait and thorny path, and up the steep and rugged and difficult ascent. "If we be dead with him we shall also live with him." First, there is the agonizing with him in death, then the joint resurrection with him to life. "If we suffer with him we shall also reign with him." First, there must be the association with him in suffering, then the association in sovereignty. As the same apostle saith in Romans, chap. vi. verse 5, "For if we be planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." And again in the 8th verse, "Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe we shall also live with him." As if he had said, except you die with him, you may not live with him; except you suffer with him, you may not reign with him. So Christ himself,—“Except a man deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me, he cannot be my disciple.”

Now this, my beloved brethren, is the settled constitution, and it is well that we should be assured of it; for there is no escaping the operation of the universal law, as you will find by many and positive declarations of holy writ.

The glory is most certain—but so too is the suffering; for Christ assured his disciples that they should be partakers of his cup and baptism of sorrow, while he was silent as to the measure of their after recompence. We are to have our minds made up as to the certainty of the suffering, that we may not be staggered, or count it a strange thing, when it comes. Thus, St. Paul speaks,—“That no man should be moved by these afflictions; for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.” The way not to be moved by the affliction is to be prepared for it. And so he exhorts his son Timothy,—“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel.” It should not be with us as it is sometimes with heedless mariners in summer seas, when they are sleeping under a serene sky and on a tranquil billow, and the storm wakes in a moment, and comes in its might, and takes them unprepared. We should be never off our guard, but be looking out for squalls and tempests, as knowing that we are in the latitude of storms, and forewarned of their approach. For whatever else may be doubtful in the believer’s prospect, this is cer-

tain, that he must be made familiar with affliction; and whatever other portion God may withhold from us in the present state, he will give us all a participation in the heritage of affliction.

Nor let any one say, that when we state this, we are giving a gloomy picture of the religion we preach, or clothing this world in hues of fanatical darkness. It is not to discourage the soul, but to fortify it and prepare it for the fight it must wage, that we blow this note of the battle trump. For it was when he was confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, that Paul told them that they must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. No,—it is not the scriptural view of the discipleship that makes men spiritless and unhappy, robbing them of their peace, and disqualifying them for exertion; but that unfaithful representation which leads them to view this as a state of rest, when it is in fact a state of labour, and a time for ease and indulgence, when it is in fact the time for self-denial and mortification, and daily sacrifice of inclination at the



shrine of duty. It is the daintiness and the silkiness of religious profession that does the harm, and makes us slothful and effeminate, and unlike the worthies of thew and sinew and iron frame in the apostolic era, and in the days of the glorious reformation.

Thus the apostle urged, and he desires to remember it himself, that the Christian is to prepare for affliction, and must be associated with his Lord in what He suffered, if he would participate with him in what He enjoys. And, while he desired to give such a view of the journey as might cause the believer to gird up his loins and cling to his Saviour, lest he be faint and weary, he invited him to remember that, though here he is called to endure hardness, there is repose before him; "though sorrow may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning"—though he must needs suffer with Christ, he shall also reign with him.

For we shall see that in those passages of scripture, that speak most pointedly as to the suffering, there is the most explicit intimation of the glory. Thus, in the declaration of Paul that the disciples must pass through much

tribulation ; in what is the tribulation to close ? In the kingdom of God. So in Romans viii. 13,—“ If children, then heirs, heirs with God, and joint heirs with Christ ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” And Peter admonishes us, “ Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings ; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.” When the apostle announces the former fact, that as disciples of Jesus, and by reason of the discipleship, we ought to look out for trouble, he proclaims, at the same time, that the trouble, if borne in the spirit of Christ, w’ll lead to glory ; he says, in the words of Christ, “ If ye die with him ye shall live with him ; if ye suffer with him ye shall reign with him.”

II. And now to consider, in what manner or degree it is, that the disciple must have fellowship in suffering with his Lord.

I may observe, in the first place, in what respects the sufferings of the disciple differ from

those of his Lord. None of the Christian's sufferings are expiatory :—all his Master's were. And it is necessary that this point of difference should be always borne in mind ; for the end of the affliction will be lost, and even injury to the soul accrue from it, if the sufferer is led, for a moment, to imagine that the chastisement is to be regarded as a sort of set-off against the sin. Yet the mistake is not unfrequent, and we shall often find persons consoling themselves in affliction, bodily or mental, under the impression that the affliction is to mitigate God's displeasure, and in some degree atone for past transgressions. Alas, there is nothing to cancel pre-existent guilt in all the pains that rack the body, or all the woes that wring the heart, or all the tears in which human wretchedness may be dissolved. For the sorrow of the world worketh death, and is without hope, and the present pain may only be the prelude of future torment. Indeed, it will be found, at times, so to occupy and chafe the mind, that it even exasperates it against the gospel. And I have often thought, that it is one of the saddest spectacles that the visitor of the sick

chamber is called to contemplate, when he hangs over a sufferer, whose bodily or mental anguish precludes attention to his message, and his offer of consolation is impatiently, or even fiercely rejected, because the thoughts are all distracted by disease. So that, so far from suffering necessarily tending to conciliate God's displeasure, and move his pity, it may be even found to add fuel to human corruption, and to widen and perpetuate the breach with heaven.

2. Again, Christ's sufferings were none of them merited ; that is, by his own proper act ; and they were all meritorious :—for it was the union of these two particulars which rendered his sufferings available for our salvation. But, on the contrary, none of the believer's sufferings can be meritorious, and they are all merited. A Christian can no more merit, by what he suffers, than by what he does. He can no more claim reward, than he can claim exemption from punishment, on the score of what he suffers. And this fact, while it constitutes an important difference between the afflictions of Christ and those of his people, is not impugned by what St. Paul says, either when he

speaks of our light afflictions working out for us a far more exceeding weight of glory, or by what he affirms of its being a righteous thing with God to recompense rest to them that are troubled : for, in the former instance, the apostle has in view the spiritual discipline of the soul for glory, and in the latter, the strict analogy in the divine proceedings between sin and punishment, and holiness and future bliss. All that he means is, that sanctified affliction qualifies the soul for larger measures of heavenly felicity, and that, though God permits his children to be afflicted here, he will compensate their affliction hereafter.

3. There is still one further point of difference to be noted, and this is, that none of Christ's sufferings were corrective ; for correction implies sin inherent, whereas all Christ's sufferings were for sin imputed. But it is hardly necessary to observe, that the sufferings of Christ's people are, many of them, nay,—I might say, most of them, corrective. Observe, I do not say punitive or penal, but corrective,—as implying the fatherly heart and hand in their affliction, and thus denoting not vengeance, which

is only exercised to destroy, but love, which has in view to purify and reclaim. I believe that I might safely say, that never was a sorrow endured by a believer which was not sent, either as a fatherly chastisement for sin committed, to shew the soul the evil of sin and the certain trouble that attends it; or as a preventive, like a medicinal draught, to correct some constitutional bias, or allay some incipient fever. I would, of course, mean by such an observation to refer a Christian to his own experience; and I think that he will admit that the cause of affliction may be often traced, and that he will be able to put his finger on the identical offence, and trace the relaxed and inconsistent walk, or abated spirituality, that appealed to God's fatherly love for correction. It was, in the quaint language of an old writer, because he went through the hedge that the serpent stung him. And, of course, where this truth is received and improved, it will not only cause the Christian to bow in submission to any past correction, and to seek in every future sorrow for the diseased part at which the sorrow points,—but also, by a lowly and devoted walk to ward off from himself, or those dear to him,

the calamities which folly or dereliction may produce.

But now, having stated the particulars in which the Christian in his sufferings is distinguished from his Lord, inasmuch as the Saviour's were all expiatory, and meritorious, and none of them corrective, I proceed to consider, in what respects, one who is united by living faith to the Son of God, must drink of his cup and be baptized with his baptism ;—in other words, “ know the fellowship of his sufferings, and be made conformable to his death.”

1. First, then, a Christian must resemble his Lord in his sufferings for righteousness' sake. Nothing can be more explicit than our blessed Master's declaration to this fact. He forewarned his disciples that they would be hated of all men for his sake,—that bonds and imprisonments awaited them for his sake; that through the obliquity of mind which enmity to the truth occasions, men would even think that in persecuting them they were doing God service. He told them that in this, as in other respects, the disciple could not be above his Lord, and that if the master of the house was called Beelzebub, much more

would they of his household. And the history of the church in every age bears testimony to a truth which has been written in letters of blood, and authenticated by the sufferings of apostles, saints, and martyrs ever since. We need not appeal simply to the inspired roll, as if it alone chronicled the sufferings of God's people,—for though poets and annalists have not always deemed the exploits of the righteous worthy their muse, history has been compelled to record them ; and where it has been silent, they have been registered on the tablets of the heart, and handed down in the traditionary recollections of a district or a family. We can point to the valleys of Switzerland, or to the mountains and glens of Scotland, or to more sunny and civilized climes for persecutions as sanguinary and wicked as those recorded in the martyrdoms of holy writ.

Such were the great out-breaks made by the spirit of the world, in modern times, on the Christian church ; but, oh, there have been thousands of obscure and solitary sufferers for Christ's sake, whose wrongs have been known only to high heaven, who found their persecu-



tors in those of their own household, and earned the crown of martyrdom amid the tears of the closet, and under the pressure of domestic unkindness. And, although many will tell you, that in these more enlightened times, there is no such suffering for righteousness as I have described,—yet, alas, we have some of us cause to know, that as in times primitive, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit, even so is it now; that now, as heretofore, every one that will live godly in this present life shall suffer persecution. We could tell you of friends grown cold, and patrons lost, and opportunities of advancement denied, and indignities put on the disciple, on account of his adherence to his Lord,—so that, without disputing the fact that there is now every toleration for the public profession of Christianity, we may be assured that the consistent discipleship will still entail, as it has ever done, the hostility and contempt of ungodly men. And therefore, while we bless God for the increasing piety and enlarged liberality of these latter days, we feel that the position, with which I started, is as true now as it ever was,

and we should not be surprised, if coming events were to shew, that the utmost liberality towards those in error may be found compatible with the deadliest intolerance towards orthodox doctrine, and practical godliness. And as I believe that it will be found in the case of every sincere Christian before me, that he has already made sacrifices and endured wrongs for Christ's sake, so I would warn him that he must still count the cost, and hold himself in readiness to suffer when the hour of trial comes.

2. I consider that a disciple must have fellowship in suffering with his Lord, in the second place, in his contact with human sin—not his own sin, but that of others. I allude to the shocks which the moral sense meets with in the contemplation of a world lying in the embrace of the wicked one. I allude to a sympathy with Jesus, in the grief with which he met the contradiction of sinners, and cried—“Ye will not come unto me that ye may live;” and wept over the fated Jerusalem, which he had so often longed to gather under his wings.

What I contend for is, that there must be that religious sensitiveness, that shrinking from

pollution in a real child of God, which renders the contemplation, or even the consciousness, of sin in others, a source of heaviness. Where there is such sensitiveness, there must be a constant exposure to sorrow in the world; for the servant of God can go no where,—nay often cannot remain within the precincts of his dwelling-place, without learning that sin is prevailing and working death around him.

Now, do you feel this a cause of heaviness to you,—can you say that you have fellowship with Christ in the grief that he experienced in his contact with carnal and ungodly men. Oh let us examine ourselves as to our sensitiveness on this point;—as to our shrinking from sin, our hatred of sin, our grief on account of sin, our sympathy with Christ in his sorrow that sin existed, and his wish to extinguish it from the face of the earth. For unless we sympathize in Christ's grief at the prevalence of sin, we can hardly expect to sympathize in his joy when sin is at an end, and the sceptre of righteousness ruleth over all.

3. To notice another point, in which the Christian must be conformed in suffering to his

Lord, and this is in self-denial and mortification. The conditions of the Christian discipleship are these, that a man deny himself and take up his cross and follow Christ. Christ, it is said, pleased not himself:—neither must his disciple. And such an obligation involves suffering in the very nature of it. It involves a constant warring against inclination, and that, not merely in the way of refusing what is agreeable, but selecting what is painful and distasteful. A Christian must mortify his own flesh; so did the Redeemer. He must spend laborious days in duties, which instead of attracting the favour of the world, and securing its wealth, will often meet no recompense but contumely and neglect. He must endure hardness; all with a view to the advancement of his Master's cause and his own progress in holiness. His attitude must be that of Samuel,—“Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth;” or of Saul,—“What wilt thou have me to do?” It may not be that the disciple should feel more at home here than Jesus did, or that, when his Master's course was one continued succession of labours and sacrifices, he should follow him by

a path of self-indulgence. No, we should strive to realize the spirit that actuated the Saviour, when, for the discharge of his high trust, he left his glories all behind him, and came into this dark and howling wilderness to suffer and to die. We should endeavour to drink of that spirit which animated him, when he chose his condition amongst the poorest of those he came to save; when he cared not even to soothe the discomforts, or beguile the lassitude of his journey. "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has not where to lay his head." Oh, what a rebuke there is here to the selfish indulgences with which we are so prone to surround ourselves, which we are apt to consider essential to our grade in society,—which a modish Christianity allows as claims to be attended to before the wants of our indigent brethren.

Can we say that we know what this fellowship of suffering with the Lord Jesus is—that in the mortification of self, the denial of what nature cries for, we have been conformed to the Saviour's death,—and is it our desire and prayer in God's strength to die daily more to

sense and self-indulgence, that we may be good soldiers, and consistent followers of Christ?

And in the other points which have been exhibited, as well as this, can we say that we have had communion with the Lord in sorrow, that his cup has been our cup, and his baptism our baptism, and his cross our cross? In the exposition of the text I have been led into a wider field than I had anticipated, and shall, therefore, continue the subject of this discourse in the evening. But I pray you, my brethren, to prove and examine yourselves on the points I have instanced; and may you be able to make out so clearly your present fellowship with Christ in the body of his death, and the likeness of his sufferings, that you may enjoy a well grounded hope of a future association with him in the rest, and in the sovereignty, and in the glory.

## LECTURE III.

### ON FELLOWSHIP IN SUFFERING AND GLORY.

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*It is a faithful saying, For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.—2 TIM. ii. 11, 12.*

IN my last discourse I adverted to the fact, that whereas to form any adequate conception of God's attributes, we must have learnt to contemplate them in the person of Christ,—there are some divine perfections of which his humanity affords our only idea. I shewed, further, how it was only in virtue of our fellowship with Jesus as a human personification of Deity that we could be said to be associated with God in suffering. And then, after observing in what points the sufferings of the disciple must be distinguished from those of his Lord, inasmuch as all His sufferings were expiatory, and all meritorious, and none of them a proper chastisement of personal sin; while

the sufferings of his people are none of them expiatory, none of them meritorious, because all *merited*, and many of them corrective,—I went on to shew that the disciple must be associated with his Lord in suffering,—must be made conformable to his death in tribulation for righteousness' sake,—in tribulation by reason of the sin prevailing in the world around him, and on account of the mortification of self to which he is bound by his christian engagement.

I proceed, now, to consider that every disciple must drink of his master's cup, and be baptized with his baptism, by reason of his exposure to temptation. It was in the foreknowledge of the temptation to which his people would be subject, that Christ prayed for them, not that they might be taken out of the world, but preserved from the evil one. And in uttering this petition, he spoke as one who had himself passed through the ordeal in which they were to be tried; who had been himself assaulted by the fiery darts of the tempter, and who owed to this circumstance both his sympathy with them, and his qualifications to support and succour them.

There must always be a mystery connected



with our Lord's liability to temptation ; for we know, that whereas it is the prevalence of sin within us that gives its edge to the temptation without—that the danger of the external assault lies chiefly in the existence of a treacherous and mutinous garrison within—yet that, in Christ's case, there was no such disposition to meet the temptation—that all the violence of the assault, and the danger of the assault, was, in his case, from without. So that Christ, though we know that he was susceptible of temptation, could not be so in the exact sense in which his people are, who carry about them the fuel which Satan seeks to inflame, and may be said to challenge assault by the avenues and facilities which their weakness exposes.

We are, however, always to bear in mind, that difficult as it may be for our present limited powers to penetrate the mystery, it is explicitly revealed ; and this not only in passages of Scripture, which speak of Christ as one who in his state of probation was the subject of fierce temptation ; but in those which describe the violence of his struggle, the extremity of his anguish, the excess even of the hor-

rible dread that crept over him in the anticipation of the coming assault. Though the holy Jesus could say, "The Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me:" yet we know that he dreaded his approach,—for we read of angels sent from heaven to strengthen him, both after the agony in the wilderness, and during that in the garden. And, indeed, as I have already had occasion to observe, when disputers talk of the impossibility of temptation in his case who is not predisposed to it, and ground upon this position the fearful heresy of the sinful humanity of the Saviour,—we need only call to mind the simple fact, that it was in the hour of their original righteousness, when our first parents were in the image of God's likeness, without the knowledge of sin, or any of its inward workings whatever, or any thing in their virgin nature that could be called predisposition to evil, or susceptibility of evil, that they became the victims of the first temptation to which they were exposed.

There is a greater difficulty involved in the assertion that there can be actual temptation in

no case where there is not a possibility of falling,—so that it has been asked, How can our Lord be said to have been tempted, unless we admit that it was within the verge of possibility that he should have been overcome?

Now, as the bare idea of a possible miscarriage on Christ's part, not only impugns his divinity, but obviously reduces the whole scheme of redemption to a mere peradventure—it might be simply met by the fact, that God's counsel in the mission of his Son was a determinate counsel,—that Christ's triumph was as much a thing of certainty, as his encounter with the serpent was—that it was a thing decreed and predicted—and that, as every event in previous history was preparatory to Christ's advent, so was every step of his journey, from the throne to the manger and the cross, and from the cross to his recovered sceptre, an absolute and irreversible appointment. And to dispute this, would be to reject Scripture, and to blaspheme God. So that whatever difficulties there may be in the doctrine of our Lord's probation, as one put on trial, and exposed to temptation, there can be no doubt that the disciple in his

conflicts, is only called to be conformed to his Lord, and may gather comfort from the fact that Christ knows the nature of his trial, and is qualified by this personal knowledge both to sympathise and succour. We are sure, indeed, that in the darkest night, when the believer's heart is most depressed—when the arrows of temptation fall the thickest around him, and in himself he feels most weak, he will derive strength from the assurance, that in this he has fellowship with Christ's sufferings. And instead of drooping in temptation, as if it was a strange thing, he should rather be confirmed by it, as a thing he is taught to expect, and in which he can recognise a bond of union with his Lord.

But there is another element of the believer's sufferings, to which we must now attend; and indeed, it is that by which the soul is most painfully exercised, and in which there is most call for the peculiar consolation which the text is calculated to unfold,—I mean the believer's conflict with corruptions, of which I have already said that they are as the fuel to temptation, and the avenues by which Satan makes

his fiercest assaults. It will not do for us to say, that were it not for our inborn corruptions Satan would be a contemptible enemy, because, as we have seen, Satan triumphed in Eden over man when there was no corruption within to aid his attack. But we shall own, if we know what spiritual conflicts are,—that were we delivered from the body of death and infirmity we bear about with us, we should find it comparatively easy to run in the way of the commandment—and that as our worst enemies in this sense are those that lodge within, so they occasion us in our renewed state our greatest heaviness. Is there one of God's children, who, if he were offered exemption from any of the mortal ills which I have already narrated, would not say at once—Oh! deliver me from the virus of in-bred depravity—relieve me from the sin that so easily besets me—only take the thorn out of my flesh—remove the messenger of Satan that buffets me, and I will esteem all othersufferings, of whatever sort, a small thing.

Now, though I feel that in characterising the believer's afflictions, I could not but notice

what is in reality their bitterest ingredient,—although I feel that here the Redeemer's sympathy is as surely to be reckoned on as in any other of the Christian's sorrows,—yet it is quite obvious, from previous admission, that the believer cannot, in this suffering, be considered exactly to resemble Christ. Whatever the Saviour's anguish in his state of probation may have been, the existence of a moral taint formed no part of it. Yet here the believer may have fellowship with Christ, though he is not assimilated to him. He can feel that he has his Saviour's arm to uphold him, and his bosom to flee to and to lean on. Christ's answer to Paul, when he cried to him for deliverance, proves this. And in his consciousness of the Saviour's grace and strength infused, the Apostle was enabled to glory in his infirmities that the power of Christ might rest upon him. Therefore we say to our tried and afflicted brethren, who feel the flesh warring against the spirit, and the law in their members warring against the law of their minds, and bringing them into captivity—In this your sorest trial, Christ is near you : as far as he, who is sinless, may, he has

fellowship with you ; and the very immaculate purity of his own bosom enables him to feel a keener pity for you, and a more tender desire to relieve you. Let not the thought, that in this particular there is, perhaps, least of affinity between your sufferings and those of Christ, dispirit you ; but be well assured that his bosom yearns over you, that the infinite distance at which he is removed from the evil you groan under, only the better qualifies, and the more disposes him to save.

There is another point of resemblance between the Christian's sufferings and those of his Lord, which, though it involves difficulty, yet must be here alluded to. I refer to the degree in which the believer, when groaning under a sense of sin committed, can be said to have fellowship in Christ's suffering. Can, it may be asked, can the sorrow that the Christian feels for sin, resemble that woe which shook the Redeemer's soul, as the surety and substitute for man ?

I should think, while I speak with reverence, that it may ; and that even in this, the most painful and depressing experience of all, Christ

can fully enter into the sufferings of his people. I conceive that the sin of the elect world was so handed over and imputed to the Saviour, that he was made not merely to undergo the penal inflictions of the curse on account of it, but the actual burthen of the curse in it. How, otherwise, should we find the penitential language of the Psalms of David attributed to Jesus—uttered by David, not in his own person, but as the type or representative of the Saviour. For instance, in the fortieth Psalm, we find from the tenth chapter of the Hebrews, that the sixth and two following verses are uttered by Messiah coming to abolish the legal sacrifices by the oblation of himself once for all. And, without any apparent change of person, we find that he, who is speaking, breaks into these expressions—“Innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head; therefore my heart faileth me.” So again, to adopt the argument of Bishop Horne, there are no less than five quotations from different parts of the sixty-ninth Psalm, all con-



curing to inform us that Christ is the speaker through that whole Psalm. Yet the fifth verse of it runs thus: "O God, thou knowest my foolishness, and my guiltiness is not hid from thee." Is it not plain that Christ, in the day of his passion, standing charged with the sin and guilt of his people, speaks of such their sin and guilt as if they were his own; and not only so, but that he actually felt the bitterness of it enter his soul. The Lamb, which, under the law, was offered for sin, took the name (*ashem*) guilt, because the guilt contracted by the offerer was transferred to that innocent creature, and was typically expiated by its blood. Now was not this exactly the case, in truth and reality, with the Lamb of God? He did no sin—neither was guile found in his mouth—but he bore our sins in his own body on the tree: "he was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." And as the sense of that righteousness brings peace, so the sense of that sin imputed brought woe. We may imagine in that bitter cry which was uttered from the cross, as well as in the agony which wrung the Re-

deemer's soul in the garden, we are to see a sensible participation on the part of Jesus in the woes which sin so felt occasions. And if so, oh ! what a view is opened up of the absolute oneness of the believer with his Lord ; and how fully we may feel ourselves identified with our Saviour in the justifying righteousness, when we see how he was identified with us in the sense of the imputed sin.

III. Now I have spoken of the necessity of the believer's suffering for his Lord, and with his Lord, and I am now to consider the end which this sympathy of suffering is intended to promote. " If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." The suffering is preparatory and subservient to the glory to be revealed. It is an essential part of the discipline by which God trains the soul for the future heritage. All the sorrow that the justified person experiences, in his endurance of persecution, in his contemplation of the sin of others, in temptation and conflict, or under a depressing sense of sin inherent,—is intended by God, and if rightly improved, will be overruled by God for his advance in holiness, and his qualification for

heavenly scenes. There are, indeed, secondary intentions, so to speak, by which the sufferings of a believer are made to contribute to the good of the church, and the furtherance of God's cause and work with others. Thus the Apostle writes—"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life, also, of Jesus, might be made manifest in our body;" in which passage he alludes to the believer's participation in his Master's sufferings, tending by the example of faith and patience thus afforded, to make known and recommend saving truth. But the end of the suffering with which I am now concerned, is its subordination to the moral discipline of the individual soul, and eventually to its participation with Christ in glory. We must suffer with Christ before we reign with him, that we may be conformed to his image, and endued with his Spirit, and fitted for endless communion with Him in heaven. When the Apostle announces the proposition that we must first suffer before we reign—that the suffering is introductory to the sovereignty, he does not mean to intimate that there is any

*necessary* connexion between present sufferings and future glory—so that the glory must ensue upon the suffering—that the suffering is the first step to which the glory is necessarily the sequence ; but he means to say, that without such an education for heaven as a participation in Christ's affliction implies, we should want the character which is to capacitate us for its enjoyments.

And sure am I, that none of God's afflicted ones will either murmur at the appointment to which they have been submitted, or deny the salutary effects of it in themselves. They will all admit that it has been good for them to be afflicted—that they have learnt more in the house of mourning than they could in the house of feasting, not only of what they themselves are, but of what God in Christ is.

Indeed, were it not for suffering, we should know very little of what Christ's religion is ; of what its consolations are, as well as its duties—of what God has to give. It has always been in seasons of trial that God has been found most precious, that his Gospel has been best understood, that the soul has been most renewed in

knowledge after the image of him who made it. The saints of God seem to have learnt most of their deep experience in the school of affliction, and their own souls have been then most watered, that they might be enabled to uphold others. The Saint's Rest and the Pilgrim's Progress, those rich and nervous treatises, were both composed in prison ; and it was a common remark of the pious Bishop Porteus, when he heard of the sickness of an esteemed Christian, that something to instruct and edify might be soon expected from her pen.

For as the sufferings of Christ abound in His people, so their consolations also abound by Christ. And who, that knows what the consolations are, would not be willing to purchase them at the price of the previous affliction ? Who, above all, that has at heart the interest of Christ's church, that would see it flourish in the gifts and graces of the Spirit, would wish to avert the temporary troubles which befall her ; or what servant of Christ who is bent on the success of his master's cause, would shun the occasional tribulation, which is to enable him to comfort those that are in any trouble,

with the same comfort wherewith he himself is comforted of God.

Yes! it is well for our present peace, for our experience of the rich consolation, for our advance in practical righteousness, for our withdrawal from seductive allurements, for our deliverance out of the meshes which worldliness and self-indulgence would weave around us—that affliction is accessory to the final glory,—that we must have fellowship with Christ in trouble, and suffer with him, before we reign with him.

For, after all, glory is at the door; what a pity we should not be made ripe for it. Oh! if we could but penetrate the cloud that wraps the horizon, and see the flood of effulgence which is to burst upon us—if we could but compare the light and evanescent affliction with the weight of glory that is to succeed it, how soon we should wipe our eyes, and let smiles take the place of tears. If we only saw how the fellowship of suffering qualifies for the fellowship of glory—how the suffering augments the glory and will enhance it,—how different would be our feelings in the endurance

of our burdens—how ready we should be to bear the cross—how we should covet affliction, from which we are now so anxious to escape.

Are there any here present who have been sorrowing, or are sorrowing, as Christians; who have suffered, or are suffering, with Jesus? Let such remember what is the object of the suffering and the end of it. It is not till we are capacitated for glory that we can be translated to it. The sheaves must be ripe before they are cut down.—And when they are ripe—oh! it is not a matter of regret that they should be burdened and hang their heads, for they will be only a more weighty and welcome crop for God's garner. After ye have suffered awhile, God will make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

For a moment to recapitulate. I have told you that you are to suffer—that it is appointed—that it may not be evaded. Is this depressing? Consider the end of the affliction—what it is to promote, in what it is to ensue. You are to have a fellowship with Christ in suffering, to assimilate you to his image—to introduce you

into nearer and dearer communion with God in Him—to enable you to reap a larger amount of present consolation—to qualify you for an endless participation in the glory to be revealed. If you are called to suffer, it is that you may be qualified to reign. Oh, bear this in mind. The suffering tends to burnish your crown—to make it brighter—to stud it with more costly and radiant gems—to qualify you to wear it. If you can always realize this truth in affliction, you will come to regard affliction as a blessing—you will not be so easily staggered when it approaches, and after awhile you will be able to say, as a dying lady did, “I love my afflictions—they are sent by God, and I love every thing He sends me; for they are sent in love, and will do me good.”

To any one who is impatient under suffering, who writhes under it, and kicks against it, I would say,—Is it a cause of complaint with you that the road to glory lies through affliction—that in order to have fellowship with Christ in sovereignty, you must have fellowship in suffering? Oh let the thought of the closeness of



your union with Christ, if you are a believer, in all else, reconcile you to your fellowship with him in this point too. True, you must participate with him in sorrow—but do you not participate with him in consolation: do you not participate with him in wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption? Shall you not hereafter be the joint assessor of his throne? Should you wish to be the only one of his ransomed heritage who shunned the cross in the way to glory—who coveted the crown, but refused to be baptized with his baptism, or to drink of his cup? I am sure you would think shame, if it might be,—to be pointed out hereafter in the radiant throng of heaven, as the only one who had passed up to Zion by a flowery road, who stood before the throne without having dyed your robes in the blood of tribulation.

No; rather let us be all willingly partakers of the needful afflictions: let us not be moved by them; for we know they are appointed. Let us be content to fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, in the hope

that we may be found in Him, when He shall appear to recompense those that are troubled ; and all that have wept and mourned for, and with, Him, shall be comforted and glorified with Him for ever.

## LECTURE IV.

ON ACCESS TO FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER  
BY THE SON.

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*No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

1 JOHN xiv. 6.

I HAVE spoke of that communion with God which is essential to salvation, and which in reality constitutes salvation. I shewed what it implied, and hinted at the future blessed results which must ensue from it. Even in respect of the less inviting feature of the fellowship,—I mean, the sympathy of suffering, I shewed how this was only temporary, and will be subservient to the future endless association with Christ in happiness.

I would trust that in those of you who are already partakers of the benefit, there is an increasing desire for further and richer measures of this fellowship; and in the minds of some

who may have been hitherto strangers, a desire to be introduced into it.

Now in the text we have a clear intimation, from the lips of truth itself, of the only way in which fellowship with God can be obtained. "No man," saith Jesus, "cometh to the Father, but by me." Our Lord had been comforting the hearts of his disciples in the prospect of his removal; he had held forth to them a promise of their future union; he told them he was going away to prepare a place for them, and that he would come again and receive them to himself, that where he was, there they might also be. His bosom was at that moment overflowing with tenderness towards them,—and in the anticipation of a re-union in a brighter and endless existence, he was finding himself a support in the prospect of approaching trial, and furnishing what might be hereafter a cordial to his drooping disciples. At such a moment, when, as it might be conceived, he was most anxious that there should be no mistake as to the means of present and future acceptance with his heavenly Father, he delivered the momentous declaration of the text. Having

assured his disciples how he loved them, and having expressed his tender anxiety that where he was, there they might also be for ever, he declared, that it was only in virtue of fellowship with himself, that they, or any, could have fellowship with the Father; that no man could approach the supreme God as an acceptable worshipper, or come to the eternal enjoyment of him in heaven, except by the way of a lively and implicit reliance on himself. He said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me."—We are invited to ponder this momentous declaration; to examine the grounds upon which it is explained; and to take it home by a close and personal application to ourselves.

I purpose unfolding and establishing the doctrine by three considerations. We may perceive that it is only through the intercession of the Lord Jesus that we can come to God the Father;—

I. Because we can know nothing of the character of Jehovah as a reconciled God, except as he is revealed in the person and work of Jesus Christ;

II. Because we can recognize no sufficient pledge for pardon and acceptance with the Father, except as such is furnished by the righteousness and satisfaction of the Lord Jesus Christ;

III. Because we can never approach God with filial confidence and reliance, except through the mediation and intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. Now to begin with the instructive and encouraging manifestation of God made to us in the person and work of the Lord Jesus. It was the famous saying of him who has been adjudged the wisest of the heathen, that we should never know any thing of God unless some one came down from heaven to teach us. What the pagan sage thus guessed at, the word of God confirms. "No man," said John the Baptist, "has seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath revealed him." "No man," said Christ himself, "knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any one the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal him." This is true, simply in reference to

that more distinct and emphatic revelation of the Divine character which the Saviour made by his personal instructions. When we contemplate Jesus simply in his prophetic office, as the teacher of the Church by his oral ministrations, we shall admit,—that in comparison with the light which he threw on the character of God, and the nature of his feelings and intentions towards his creatures, man may be said to have known comparatively nothing of God until the mission of Jesus Christ into the world.

But my argument rather refers to the vivid and affecting revelation of God discovered to us in the humanity of Jesus, and in the work which, as God in flesh, he was enabled to accomplish. It is in respect of that incarnate representation of Deity which Jesus gave, when as the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, he moved about the world he had made, that we explain the one assertion, that no man knoweth the Father but he to whom the Son shall reveal him, so as to elucidate the other, that no man cometh to the Father but by the Son. The

proposition I am urging is simply this—that if we would search out God, so as to acquaint us with his gracious and paternal features—if we would know him, according to that knowledge which draws the soul, and binds the soul, to him,—and which, by the altered feeling towards him which it produces, is justly to be reckoned eternal life,—we must acquaint ourselves with him as he was manifested to the eye of sense in the apostles' day, and is still manifested to the eye of faith in the person of his Son. “He that hath seen me,” said Christ, “hath seen the Father;” and again, “If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also;” and again, in reference to the judicial blindness of his countrymen the Jews, “He that hateth me, hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.” We can conceive no words conveying, more forcibly than these, the absolute identity between the lowly personage, known to the Jews of his day as the reputed Son of the Carpenter, and the very and eternal God who sits upon the heavens.



“ Shew us the Father,” said Philip, “ and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father, and how sayest thou, Shew us the Father. Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me.”—The revelation which Philip asked for, Jesus had already made. God had accommodated his new dispensation to the infirmities of his creatures. The attributes, which when formerly declared, had been imperfectly apprehended, were now embodied in the human person of Emmanuel,—and the dullest understanding might acquaint itself with a God, who was no longer revealed in his mere spiritual essence, but could be seen with the eyes, and heard with the ears, and handled with the hands.

For oh! how different the abstract truth that God is a just, and a holy, and a beneficent, and a sin-forgiving God, from the impression con-

veyed to the mind by the embodied personification of the same truth, in the gracious look, and speech and gesture, in the healing touch and the life-giving word, and all those human tenderesses which characterised the friend of publicans and sinners, and soothed the anguish of a Martha or a Magdalen. How different to be told that God is merciful, from the actual contemplation of Christ engaged in the laborious offices of mercy—to be told that God feels for our infirmities, from beholding God in Christ bearing our infirmities—to be told that God pities the afflicted, from beholding God in Christ mingling his human tears with the weeping sisters of Lazarus—to be told that God quickeneth the dead, from beholding God in Christ arresting and repairing the ravages of corruption—to be told that God careth for us, from beholding God in Christ spending his strength and lavishing his endearments, as the friend and brother of our race—to be told that he is a just God and yet a Saviour, from beholding him in his own person paying a debt to justice on the cross, and in the hour of mortal anguish and debility assuring the dying

malefactor of being associated with him in Paradise.

On the same principle that example speaks more pointedly than precept, would the exemplification of the Divine character in Jesus convey a lesson to the men of his day, that they never could have gathered from any mere enumeration of the attributes of God, however faithful or however glowing. And on the same principle may we—who read in Gospel history what Christ's contemporaries actually witnessed—borrow from the portraiture of God, furnished by the Holy Jesus, such lively and soul-affecting impressions of Divine holiness and tenderness, of his abhorrence of sin, and yet his love for the sinner, as no other revelation of these truths could possibly have afforded. So that on the first ground which I enumerated—that all our adequate impressions of the true character of God must be derived from the person of the Saviour—we establish the text, that “no man cometh to the Father, but by Christ.”

II. Again:—It is to be demonstrated from the fact, that the righteousness which Christ wrought out by his active and passive obedience—

by what he did, and what he suffered—furnishes the only foundation upon which the soul can rest its plea for pardon, or its hope of acceptance. Every other bed shall be found too short to lie on—every other shelter shall the tempests of eternity sweep away. To assert this, is only to state the oft-reiterated declaration of the word of God. “Neither,” saith the apostle, “is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given unto men whereby we must be saved.” “Verily, verily,” saith Jesus, “I am the door of the sheep. I am the door: by me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture.” And again;—“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” And again in our Lord’s answer to the expostulation of Peter, “If I wash thee not thou hast no part in me.” It is only in that obedience, by which Christ fulfilled the whole law, that the soul can find a plea to urge, in the face of a commandment which calls for universal and undeviating obe-

dience, and pursues with a curse the slightest transgression. It is only in that expiatory blood, which Jesus shed at Calvary, that the soul, when once alive to sin, can find a moment's solace to the upbraidings of conscience. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." "Forasmuch as ye are redeemed not with corruptible things as with silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." "For Christ also hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." "For Christ, who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." We might appeal to the testimony of all, in every age, who have been convinced of sin, to confirm this. We might turn, either to the history of the victims of superstition, who have sought in vain, in human devices, for that peace which Christ's doctrine alone can give;—or we might appeal to the triumphant testimony of the saints of every age, who have set to their seal that Christ's blood cleanseth from all sin, and his righteousness constitutes a plea for well-grounded hope—who

having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, are now before the throne,—or are travelling their way to it in the full assurance that other foundation can no man lay, save that which is laid, even Jesus Christ.

I brought forward, on a recent occasion, the remarkable illustration borne to the doctrine I am urging by the greatest of modern moralists on his death-bed. When Samuel Johnson lay in the grasp of the great destroyer, he felt that the foundation of self-righteousness—which, indeed, at no time had proved a support to his mind—in the prospect of dissolution and judgment, failed him altogether; and it was not till he sought the counsel of an evangelical instructor, and reposed his soul on the evangelical doctrine, that he could gather fortitude for his great change. Oh! that the trembling inquiry of that colossal genius, and the answer which through God's mercy he was afterwards enabled himself to give to it, were rung in the ears of all, who without half his moral pretensions, are resting in the plea, which he, through grace, at last abandoned. “How can I know that I have done enough,” was his inquiry of

some one who was endeavouring to administer false peace. "My dear friend," he afterwards observed, "believe a dying man, there is no salvation but in the sacrifice of the Lamb of God."

Blessed are those, who, even at the last hour, are brought to make this confession from the heart, and are able in penitence and faith to repose their souls upon it! I rejoice in the persuasion that there are many before me at this moment who have tasted and known that the Lord is gracious in the Son of his love—who have found Emmanuel to be indeed "a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Such know that the work of his righteousness is peace, and the effect of a repose in it, quietness and assurance for ever.

But there may be many too who have neither mentally admitted the truth, nor spiritually felt its power. I know that even of a congregation that has been long schooled in scriptural doctrines, there will be those who have never felt them; and I can imagine that there are often in

this, and other churches, casual hearers who are quite at issue with us on the nature of the Christian covenant. I say to both such characters,—to him who is ostensibly with us, but spiritually dead to God,—and to him who neither admits nor feels the Gospel doctrine,—Ponder, I beseech you, the Lord's message to you to-day. "No man," saith Christ, "cometh unto the Father, but by me." Can words be more emphatic and distinct than these? And you have heard the commentary furnished on them by other passages of Scripture. Now, you have never come to God through Christ in a penitent, and heartfelt, and adoring reliance on his blood, as your only atonement, and on his merits, as your only plea for acceptance. You are either, while in word you admit the truth of the doctrine, resting in a mere cold, formal, hypocritical recognition of it: or you are actually opposing it,—and, going about to establish your own righteousness, have not submitted yourself to the righteousness of God. In either case, you are an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, a stranger to the covenant of promise, without hope and without



God in the world. Oh, let me plead with you for your immortal soul. You are on the verge of perdition. There is nothing between you and the flames of hell, but the forbearance of that God, whose overtures of mercy you have so long and obstinately disregarded. Do you profess your belief in the doctrine, and other plea urge none, than the obedience unto death, and in death, of the incarnate Jesus? Then, where is your gratitude towards him; your penitent, and at the same time rejoicing sense of his mercy: your devotedness of heart and life to his service! Have you come to God by Him, as one actually cleansed in his blood, and invested with the comeliness which he puts on his saints; and can you say, that your conscience has been purged from dead works, and your heart is assured before him? If not, why delay any longer in so miserable and ruinous a state—why rest in a name to live, when conscience tells you you are dead, dead, dead in sin—why not close, this day, with the overture of grace? “No man cometh unto God but by Christ:”—but *any man* may come by Christ. The way is prepared—the door is open—the in-

vation is implied, if not actually addressed to you in the text. If you perish, your blood must be on your own head: it will be because you would not come unto Christ and live.

Or there may be those who spurn the evangelic doctrine, or coldly disregard it, as the mere by-word and Shibboleth of a set of weak enthusiasts. What, then, is the foundation upon which your own more vaulting ambition builds? You are not disposed to rest your all on the vicarious obedience and sufferings of a Saviour. May I ask, have you any better plea to urge? Has your own obedience ever afforded you solid peace? Can you rejoice in it, as a complete and finished work? Is it the sort of robe, in which you think you can pass the scrutiny of the All-seeing eye? Is there no speck in it—no rent in it—no slight blot that mars its lustre—no small fissure, through which the eye of a severe judge, or the jealousy of the accusing spirit, can expose the nakedness of the soul. Oh, consider this: Look well to your plea! Examine your vesture; ponder the title on which you rest your hope—for if there be but one solitary speck in your whole life, which,

when held up in the light of heaven, the eye of an intense and microscopic inspection can detect in it—you had better be beneath the mountain, or in the womb of the nethermost hell, than presume to present yourself in such a garb as a candidate for heaven.

There remains another argument in proof of the doctrine I am expounding : that none can be said to come to God except by Christ, because no one can approach him as a God and Father except through the mediation and intercession of a Saviour. Observe, my previous arguments were these : 1st, No man can form a just conception of the Divine character, except as he studies it in the work and person of the Lord Jesus. 2ndly, No one can possess an assurance of pardon, or a title for admission into heaven,--except as such is furnished by the Saviour, and appropriated to the soul by self-renouncing faith in him. The third and last proposition is, that it is only through the intervention of the Saviour—as our advocate and mediator—that we can draw near God with any hope that our suits will be answered, or our services accepted. “There is one Mediator

between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." "By whom also we have access into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." "For by him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." "In whom we have boldness of access by faith." "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." As the High Priest of the Jews communicated between God and the people,—presenting their offerings before the mercy-seat, and coming out again to bless them ; so must Jesus be at once the channel of our prayers and services, in their ascent to God,—and of his mercies, in their descent to us. He is the true medium, of which Jacob's ladder was the type, by which all intercourse between this world and the celestial regions must be maintained. The purest and costliest offerings of the Christian,—if they were not incensed by the merits of Christ, and presented in His golden censer,—could never come before the Lord. Yea, truly, were the favour of God not propitiated by the hand through which the service passes,—and the advocate more considered

than those he pleads for,—the sacrifices of the purest heart have sin enough in them to bring down the fire of the Lord,—not in token of acceptance, but of displeasure and judgment; and when we approach God we should be dealt with as the offerers of strange fire, and our censers would be against our own souls. But the merits of the Mediator countervail the demerits of his clients: in the Beloved our services are accepted,—and if we ask any thing in Christ's name, it shall be given us.

Oh! were it not for the intervention of the Lord Jesus—who, the holiest amongst us, could take courage to approach that God who charges his angels with folly, and before whom the heavens are not clean! Then, indeed, might we quake and be afraid of Him, and cry to Him, that He should not speak to us lest we be consumed. But now are we not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire,—nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,—but unto the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.

“ Now we are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom, we, also, are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.”

My beloved, do you recognise and realise your privilege to approach God as your friend and Father, through the mediation of his Son? Do you see that the way into the holiest of all is made manifest, and are you rejoiced to avail yourselves of it? Do the walls of your houses, and the doors of your closets bear witness to your sense and use of that privilege of which I have been speaking? Are you often found seeking an audience with your King in the name and mediation of your great High Priest and Advocate? Is the intercourse with heaven dear to you? Is it frequent? Do you esteem it your chiefest joy that you may have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus? Then, happy are you! For the intercourse which is now only partial, and often disturbed, will soon be complete and uninterrupted—and He

who has so often introduced you to the throne of grace, will, by and by, present you faultless with exceeding joy before the immediate presence of your King; and you shall then drink at the spring-head what you now only sip by the way: for the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall lead you to fountains of living waters; and God, your own God, shall wipe away all tears from your eyes!

I would say a word to those who are coming this day in the exercise of their cherished privilege to the table of the Lord. May you be enabled to do so with enlarged affection, and an unhesitating confidence in your Saviour's love. Consider the greatness and the unchangeableness of his affection—the prevalence of his advocacy—the preciousness and abundance of the gifts he has to bestow,—and the sovereign largeness of his heart, and munificence of his hand in bestowing them. Be encouraged to expect and to ask great things. Your God has great things to give. There is no penuriousness with Him. “Ye are not straitened in your God—be not straitened in yourselves.” Call to mind his rich and reiterated promises. Dwell upon the

inviolable guarantee of His covenant. Remember by what a new and living way you are invited to approach Him—that it is consecrated and perfumed by the graces of the humanity which Christ assumed into Deity,—and that coming by such a chartered high-way, and having such a High Priest over the throne of God, draw near with full assurance of faith, having your heart sprinkled from an evil conscience. He is faithful that has promised. Have you any peculiar burden under which you are drooping—any peculiar temptation which is assailing you—any old and inveterate sin which too easily besets you—or any special grace which you are solicitous to obtain? Now is the time: the suitable moment for more than ordinary urgency: the likely juncture at which you may anticipate a more than ordinary acceptance—the *mollia tempora fandi*! Do not lose your suit for want of boldness and earnestness in preferring it. Ask in faith, nothing doubting. Plead the efficacy of a Saviour's blood and the prevalence of his advocacy. Hang upon the skirts of his garment.



Ply him hard with entreaties; he loves an eager applicant. Only ask in faith, nothing wavering. And may God supply all your need out of the unsearchable and unspeakable riches of Christ. Amen, Amen!

## LECTURE V.

ON ACCESS TO THE FATHER BY THE SPIRIT.

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*For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.*—EPHESIANS ii. 18.

IN my last discourse I dwelt upon the only channel through which a fallen and guilty creature can draw near to God. "No man," saith the Saviour, "cometh unto the Father but by me." I elucidated this proposition under three heads. First, that it is only by Christ that we can come at the true character of God, as a reconciled and gracious Father. Secondly, that it is only in the merits of Christ, that we can recognize any sufficient pledge for pardon and acceptance with the Father. Thirdly, that it is only through the mediation and intercession of Christ that we can ever approach God, in service, or in worship, with filial confidence and reliance. I observed, that in the humanity of

Christ, we behold a personification of Deity, which speaks to our hearts in a more affecting and convincing manner than any other revelation could have done; that in the meritorious obedience and expiatory sacrifice of Christ, we behold the only foundation upon which the soul can rest its plea for pardon, and its hope of acceptance; and, lastly, that only through the intervention of Christ as Advocate, can we draw near God with any prospect that our suits will be entertained, or our obedience welcomed. And having thus unfolded and established the argument of the text, I urged upon all, the peril of resting upon any other foundation than the work of Him, by whom alone we have access by faith into the covenant of grace, and can rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

In pursuance of the plan originally marked out for these discourses, our attention will be now directed to the manner in which the soul may be interested in Christ's salvation,—in which there may be appropriated to it a personal share in that fellowship to which faith in Christ is the only passport. We have seen

the need of Christ's incarnation, of His suretyship, of his constant and prevailing advocacy and mediation : and we are now to consider the need of the operation of the Holy Spirit, in applying the salvation thus accomplished to the believer's soul, and making it thereby partaker of the Divine nature.

“Through whom,”—that is, Christ, “we both have,” saith the Apostle, “access by one Spirit unto the Father.” Here we have the Saviour exhibited, as the storehouse and channel of salvation, and the alone Mediator through whom we can be restored to friendship and union with the Father ; and the Holy Spirit denoted as the alone agent, by whom what Christ has effected may be made our own,—so that we may be implicated in the benefits of his obedience and his sufferings, and may be participators in the consolations and graces which he has purchased. We have the three Divine Persons in the Trinity revealed to us, in the several relations which they occupy towards the redeemed and regenerated soul :—the Redeemer, who has wrought righteousness, and offered atonement, *in* whom we are to believe :—

the Holy Ghost, who reveals and applies the obedience and atonement, *by* whom we believe;—and the Father, to whom, in virtue of what Christ has done *for* us, and the Holy Ghost has effected *in* us, we are reconciled and restored. We shall see that the work of the Holy Spirit is as essential as that of the blessed Son—that even after Christ had paid the price of our redemption, were it not for the co-operation of the Divine Spirit, He had died in vain:—that though there be riches unsearchable stored up in Jesus, we shall be none the better <sup>of</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> them, unless we are personally introduced to them, and invested with them by the Holy Ghost.

There might be copious quotations from Scripture to prove this. I will instance a few : “He that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.” Here are the suitability and sufficiency of the salvation for all.—“No man can come unto me except the Father draw him.” Here is the indispensable necessity of an energy which the Spirit is commissioned by the Father to employ to introduce the soul to a participation in what is provided.—“There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.”

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Here is the declaration of the judicial acquittal and acceptance of a soul interested in the Saviour's work.—“ Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Here is the practical demonstration that there has been a work of the Spirit in order to, and in proof of, an interest in the work of the Redeemer.—“ He that believeth in the Son hath everlasting life.” But what is the result of this believing and the evidence of its existence? “ If any man be in Christ he is a new creature.” “ If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his.”—And, to conclude, with an irrefragable proof, that if there be no access to the Father but through Christ—there is no access except by the Spirit. “ No man,” saith Christ, in the text on which I commented last Sunday, “ cometh to the Father but by me.” Add to this, His declaration to Nicodemus: “ Except a man be born again of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

And a moment's consideration of what Christ's salvation is, will establish the proposition I am urging. *What*, I would ask, constitutes the bar, in any case, to the soul's fellowship with the

Father? Why,—the judicial curse which sin entails, and the spiritual curse which sin involves:—the condemnation which attaches to the person of the sinner, and the pollution which rankles in his heart. There are the actual guilt which merits divine judgment, and the diseased and carnal state of mind which is enmity against God. To restore any soul to fellowship with God, it is requisite that both the condition and disposition should be altered—that the guilt should be remitted, and the nature should be changed,—that the soul should be both justified and regenerated—that is, should be reckoned righteous before God, and be made, in temper and affections, like unto God. And it is the joint work of the Saviour, and of the Holy Spirit, to effect this. By His obedience unto death, the blessed Jesus has made an infinite satisfaction to Divine justice; and by his merits he has purchased and treasured up for those who shall believe in him, those spiritual gifts which enrich, and those spiritual influences which transform the heart. Whenever any one is really introduced by faith to an interest in Christ, he is made at once a partaker of the

joint benefits of the Saviour's whole work,—his sin is pardoned—his person accepted, or counted righteous,—and his heart is changed. And by reason of this revolution of state and character, he is reinstated in fellowship with the Father : he dwells in God, and God in him. For to this end Christ “ascended up on high, and led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.”

But then, it is the Spirit of God which engenders in the heart that faith, which appropriates to the individual the benefits of the Saviour's work,—which justifies by changing the state, and regenerates by changing the nature. So that, as I before observed, the operation of the Spirit is as essential as that of the Redeemer ; and all that the blessed Jesus did and suffered, is as a sealed fountain, and a hid treasure, unless the Holy Spirit take of his salvation, and reveal and apply it to the soul. For it is, through Christ, by the Spirit, that we have access unto the Father.

And here I would enquire of you, in all anxiety for your eternal welfare, how far you



have apprehended the work of Christ *for you*, and can realize the work of God's Spirit *within* you. You admit the need of an interest in the Saviour;—what is the proof you have attained it? Through Christ have you access by one Spirit unto the Father? Have you received the Spirit of adoption whereby you cry Abba, Father? Has God sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts? Does the Spirit bear witness with your spirit, that you are the children of God? Has the doctrine of Christ's substitution for you, come to you not merely in word, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost? Has it regenerated, as well as enlightened you? Do you feel that you are a new creation? Have you the Spirit of Christ: for if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His? It is they only that are led by the Spirit of God, that are the sons of God. We know that it is possible to have a form of godliness, while we are strangers to its power—to say, Lord, Lord, while we do not the will of God—to have a name to live, while we are spiritually dead. May we be enabled to apply the test with fidelity,—and may the answer of conscience be such

as will satisfy, not ourselves only, but him who is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

For I shall now enumerate some of the operations of that one Spirit, by whom we have access unto the Father. The application will be, in great measure, left to yourselves,—but the particular statements will furnish so many touchstones, by which you may test your interest in the Saviour, and through him your fellowship with the Father. I have above insisted on the need of a spiritual influence to renew the heart, in order to our introduction into any measure of communion with God. And I grounded my argument upon the fact, that the characteristic of all that are in Christ—unto whom there is therefore no condemnation—is this, that they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Your attention is now invited to some of the particular operations of the Divine Agent, by whom we have access to God.

I.—First, then, the Spirit of God is an enlightening Spirit. He teaches all things. His office is to lead into all truth,—to testify of Christ,—to receive the things of Christ, and to shew

them to us,—to reveal to us the things which God has prepared for us. Without Him we can possess no saving knowledge of God, or of his covenant of grace, or of the preciousness and suitability of a Saviour,—or of the aggravated sin and deep defilements of our own hearts, which make a Saviour necessary. “For what man,” saith the apostle, “knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him:—even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God.” And again: “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him:—neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” When Christ spoke of the coming of this Divine personage, he told his disciples that he should teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever he had said unto them. Thus he foretells in his valedictory discourse in the 16th chapter of St. John, and at the twelfth and following verses, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into all truth: for he shall not

speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear he shall speak, and he shall shew you things to come : he shall glorify me ; for he shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you." And as an evidence, that such a Divine instructor is required, we read in St. John's Gospel, chapter xii., and 16th verse : " These things understood not the disciples at the first, but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that he had done these things unto them." And if we require further proof of the need of Divine illumination to teach, and to recall what is learnt,—we may look at the judicial blindness of the Jews, when they fulfilled their own scripture in the very fashion of Christ's death, and in the reproaches they cast on him,—and heard, without conviction, their victim use the very words, which it was predicted their Messiah should employ.

If then it is, by the knowledge of God in Christ, that we are to be ushered into that fellowship with him, which constitutes eternal life, it is obvious, in order to this access, we must be instructed by the Spirit. He must

reveal to us the character and the bearing of the economy of grace,—convincing us of the sin inherent in ourselves, and imputed to the Saviour,—of the righteousness wrought out by the Saviour, which must be accounted unto us, and engendered in us,—and of the judgment by which Satan was dethroned, when the Saviour triumphed over him by his cross, and by which his sceptre is broken in the heart of every regenerated man. We must learn the lesson that is to save us, of the Spirit, at the foot of the Redeemer's cross; and oh! the cross itself must be the text-book, out of which the Spirit is to teach us what we are in ourselves, and must be made, in, and through the Saviour, in order to our being saved.

Now, brethren beloved, how far have you been thus taught? Have you ever yet been brought, in a sense of your native ignorance and darkness, to long for, and look up for, the Spirit's teaching? Have you ever been so far taught, as to know, that, without the Spirit, you can know nothing? Have you ever felt that the mere light of intellect and research—without illumination out of Heaven—cannot search out

God:—that, without Divine teaching, you will meet with darkness in the day time, and grope in noonday as in the night? Have you as yet been, in any wise, enlightened in the knowledge of a Saviour,—so that you can say from the heart, “I know that whereas I was blind now I see?” And what you do know of Christ and of his salvation,—has it been received, not solely from man, neither has man solely taught it,—but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. For the promise is, that all God’s children shall be taught of God :—and the test that we are the children of God, is, as I stated above, that we are led by the Spirit of God.

II.—I observe, secondly, that the Spirit of God is a regenerating, as well as an enlightening Spirit,—that he transforms the heart, as well as instructs the mind,—that in fact he teaches, with a view to regenerate. In applying the word of Christ, he uses it as an instrument of spiritual regeneration. He renews *by* knowledge, that he may renew *in* knowledge. Thus the renovation in heart and understanding, which is, in some places of scripture, referred simply to the Holy Spirit,—is, in others, attributed to the mere

agent, through which he acts. And this, both in the case of the baptismal water, which is the emblem, and may be the channel of a spiritual change,—and in that revelation of the doctrine of Christ, which is, in most cases, the efficient instrument in translating the soul from darkness to light, and from Satan to God. For instance, we read in 1 Peter i. 23. “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” So in James i. 18, “Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.” So St. Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians iv. 13. “In Christ Jesus I have begotten you, through the gospel.” And yet there is no inconsistency between these passages, and those which refer the renovation in holiness to the Spirit of God ; for the former only allude to the instrument,—while the latter point out the agent, by whom the outer mechanism is employed.—“Except a man be born again of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” This declaration to Nicodemus enforces the need of that operation of the Spirit in renewing the nature, without

which there can be no approach to fellowship with God.

And oh ! my brethren, it is a question this,—the most momentous that can engage the attention. It is not a matter of mere theory, or barren speculation,—but a thing that must be realized and experienced. We can have access to the Father, only by the regenerating operation of the Spirit. “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Have we been thus regenerated by the Spirit? Have we passed through that renovating and transforming process, of which the reality and the extent are denoted in the lively figure of a new birth? For there is an earnestness and a seriousness about this language of our Lord’s, which cannot be evaded. Men call themselves Christian,—rest in their privileges as Christians,—speculate and theorize upon the doctrines of Christianity,—and yet, after all, the single and simple question at issue between us and the Almighty, and on the decision of which depends our award for eternity, is this:—Have we been born again? Has the old man been put off, and the new man put on? Are we new



creatures? This is the gist of the enquiry;—whatever is fundamental and vital in religion lies here. For “in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.” At the great day, the scrutiny will not be, as to the outward distinction,—but as to the inward change; and all the non-essentials will be merged, and all the fine-drawn distinctions overlooked, in the single enquiry,—which will sound on the ear of the formalist and hypocrite, like the note of judgment and the knell of despair—hast thou been born again of the Spirit of God?

For to establish the doctrine by further reference to Scripture: “That which is born of the flesh,” saith Christ, “is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” No birth of the Spirit,—no fellowship with God. For thus saith Paul, Rom. viii. 8. “They that are in the flesh *cannot please God.*” Why?—because they mind only the things of the flesh.—*They are enmity against God.* Why?—“because the carnal mind is not subject to the will of God; neither indeed can be.” They are, therefore, dead before God, and in danger of death eternal. If they would have

access to the Father, they must be the subjects of a transforming change. They must receive power to become the sons of God, being born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. For it is thus that the prophet describes the method, by which the Lord will gather a people to himself. He has devised means to bring his banished children home; but these means involve a transforming change. "Then," saith he, "will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be cleansed; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, to do them."

I need not repeat the argument, which has been so often advanced,—and which is dwelt on in the first of this series of Lectures,—that without similitude of nature the soul cannot possibly enjoy any fellowship with God. "Can two dwell together except they be agreed." I only

ask you to weigh the argument I have been proposing; and I think you will admit, that the Spirit which introduces us to God, must be a regenerating Spirit,—and that if we would have access to God, it must be in virtue of our acquaintance with the Holy Spirit's regenerating power.

But, hitherto, I have solely dwelt upon the preparatory work of the Holy Ghost, by which the soul is first brought home,—the process by which the heart,—if I may so speak,—is fused, and made susceptible of the subsequent impressions and polish of a heavenly character. It is the office of the Holy Spirit, to sanctify as well as to regenerate; and it is in the course of the fellowship, into which it has been admitted, that the process of the soul's spiritual renewal is carried on. I have mentioned, that it is through the instrumentality of the doctrine of the crucified Redeemer, that the Holy Spirit first enlightens and regenerates the heart. It is through the same doctrine, constantly applied by the Holy Ghost, that the soul is enriched with those graces, and encouraged to that filial confidence and communion, which are, at once, the

essence and the aliment of fellowship with the Father. We shall find that the gospel of the Saviour is still the instrument by which the Holy Spirit polishes and matures the soul, and promotes its deepening intimacy with the Father, and its growing likeness to his image. "Sanctify them," saith the blessed Jesus, when praying for his disciples, "sanctify them through thy truth. Thy word is truth." He had before said, "Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."—Thus we read in Ephesians, vth chapter, and 25th verse, that "Christ gave himself for the church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." And, to add one more quotation, which is decisive on the method by which the Holy Spirit acts in the prosecution of his work. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Yes! there is a mighty work to be effected, even after the incipient process of regeneration has been undergone; and I am not straining the text, when I represent the method by which the soul is introduced to the Father for present and endless communion, to imply all those influences, by which the Divine life is renovated and ripened, through the whole period of the Christian's probation. The access to the Father, of which I have been speaking, involves reunion with him in sentiment, and conformity to him in conduct. It is effected by that baptism of fire, and of the Holy Spirit, which Christ was to accomplish; and by the newness of life which it engenders and maintains, furnishes the conclusive proof that we have been made partakers of a new and heavenly nature.

And it is all immediately connected with an apprehension and an application of the Saviour's work. For it is, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit are abundantly shed on us. A certain class of preachers are sometimes accused of dwelling exclusively on

Christ, to the neglect of the work of the Holy Ghost. I can easily conceive a preaching of Christ, in which there is this fundamental and fatal oversight; but I am sure that they, that would promote the cause of the Holy Spirit, must largely dwell on the Saviour's work,—and that it is only when we give to each Person of the Trinity his appropriate prominence in our preaching,—and point out the access to the Father to be, through Christ, by the Spirit, that we shall promote the return of the soul to God.

I might here enter largely into a detail of the influences, by which the principle of Divine life is maintained and matured,—and the soul is carried, through stages of varying and deepening experience, from the first dawning of the heavenly light until the full meridian day of Christ. But, in doing so, I must have trenched upon other portions of the subject,—which will be more properly embraced under the general division of the means, by which the Divine fellowship, when once commenced, is to be maintained and matured. And I shall, therefore, now conclude by a few words of practical appeal.

I would say to those, who may consider that they have already had access, through Christ, by the Spirit unto the Father; and I trust that there are many here, who, without self-deception, may cherish this cheering assurance:—Are you estimating this day your glorious privilege, and aiming rightly and fully to improve it?—I have often thought, Oh! if we would dwell more upon the deliverance God has wrought for us, upon the dignity and happiness of our present relation with Him—upon the future and everlasting glories and joys that await us—how should our hearts be enlarged to run in the way of the commandment; and how should we prize and cultivate those opportunities of communion with the Almighty, both in public and private, which are so graciously and abundantly allowed us. Have we really access, through the consecrated way which Christ has opened, by the Holy Spirit, unto a reconciled and loving Father? Are the whole three Persons in the adorable Trinity conspiring at this moment to save us and make us happy? Has Christ opened a way,—and is He teaching and aiding us by His Spirit to walk in it,—by which

we may draw near that gracious Father who is waiting with gifts and graces on his mercy-seat, ready and rejoicing to bestow them ! And shall we hang back—shall we not bless ourselves in the assurance that, through the Redeemer, and by the Holy Spirit, we have an open and ready access to One who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not ? And shall we not be found thronging the road, and hanging on the doorway that admits to a fellowship so elevating and delightful ? Have we had any experience of the fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, of which the beloved John sings the praise, and to which he invites us ? Is there not enough in the conviction to warm our hearts, and fire our devotion, and to carry us, at every leisure moment, into the presence chamber of the Eternal ? Oh ! were any earthly Potentate our Father ; and had we ready access to him,—and did we know that whatever we asked we should receive—how many hours of this kingly fellowship should we enjoy, and how many suits should we have to urge for ourselves and our neighbours ? Shall we be less solicitous about our intercourse, or less impor-



tunate in our requests with that heavenly Father, who is the King of kings, and Lord of lords? Is it possible that we have admittance to His presence—that He waits for, and welcomes our approach—that He will receive us as His children, even when we have been overtaken in a fault—and shall our visits to the mercy-seat be few and far between. Oh, Lord! do thou impress us with a sense of our privilege—awaken us to a sense of our duty—enable us to prize and cultivate our fellowship with Thee in this world—and take us in thine own good time into fellowship with thee for ever in Heaven!

## LECTURE VI.

### ON MAINTAINING FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER.

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*If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.—1 JOHN i. 6, 7.*

It has been my endeavour in my previous discourses to lay before you the nature of the Christian's fellowship with God, and the manner in which it is attained. It will be my present aim to enforce the methods by which it is henceforth to be cherished and matured. And may the Spirit of God be present amongst us to accompany the word, and render it effective.

It is not my intention to enter upon the first section of the text. It contains, indeed, a weighty and solemn proposition,—and one which it becomes every professing Christian to ponder. But it does not call for a direct or lengthened exposition. It has been already urged in every previous part of my argument; for I have been enforcing throughout these lectures, the necessity of conformity to God, in him who would be saved; and my last address upon the agency of the Holy Spirit, all went to establish the fact, that if we would live with God, we must be light in him. The need of that radical change of nature, which the Spirit of God can alone effect, is based upon the eternal truth, that they that walk in darkness can have no fellowship with the Father: that we must be turned from darkness to light, in the laver of spiritual regeneration,—if we would ever see God. So that to reason out the proposition with which the text commences, would be only to repeat the arguments which have already been advanced, and again enforce the conclusion to which, I trust, all my hearers have long ago been led. If I have at all succeeded in the object proposed,

I have already fastened on the minds of those of you, who have hitherto enjoyed no vital fellowship with the Eternal, the urgent obligation to seek such through personal interest in the Redeemer of sinners, by the recreating operations of the Spirit of Holiness. And I have awoke, in the depths of the believer's soul, an echo to that momentous proposition,—that without an entire revolution of nature there can be no access to God, or fellowship with him. Those who have gone along with me will neither have been lapped in an ignorant and carnal security,—nor beguiled from the steep ascents of practical holiness, by a persuasion that the Christian's privilege is compatible with lukewarmness or inconsistency.

Without pausing, therefore, upon the Apostle's first position, that if we say we have fellowship with the Father and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth,—I proceed at once to the succeeding statement, that “if we walk in the light as Christ is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ our Lord cleanseth us from all sin.”

Now here we have two distinct propositions :

1st. That it is by walking in the light, as God is in the light, that we have fellowship, or maintain fellowship, one with another. And,

2ndly. That in connexion with the fellowship which is to keep us from sinning, there is still a provision in case we are overtaken by a fault—"the blood of Jesus Christ our Lord cleanseth us from all sin."

There is every thing here that the soul can seek in a covenant of grace. First, A preservative against sin—and, secondly, a provision in case of sin. What more can the soul require to carry it on in safety and comfort to its journey's end ; to secure it, first, against sin ; and, secondly, against despair.

I shall first consider the methods by which we may be kept near God, in the enjoyment of filial communion with him. This will be the principal portion of the subject ;—and, secondly, say a few words on the expiatory fountain opened in the blood of Jesus Christ, which will serve both as an invitation to the unbeliever, and an admonition to the dejected or backsliding Christian.

I. First, then, as to the maintenance and

furtherance of the fellowship with the Father, into which the believer is introduced. Before I enter on a specification of the means, suggested to us by Holy Writ, for this end,—I would ask your attention for a moment to a verbal criticism recently suggested to me by an esteemed member of this congregation. The first impression conveyed to the mind by the words—“we have fellowship one with another”—is, that they refer to the believer’s fellowship with his brethren,—that is, that they refer to the communion of saints, as the result of a walk in light with God. But it would appear, from examination of the context, and from the nature of the subject itself, that the Apostle’s argument applies not to the Christian’s fellowship with his brethren,—which would be a digression from the point he has in hand,—but to that continued and increasing fellowship with God himself, which is the blessed fruit of a holy and consistent walk in light. In a word, the expression—“one with another,” alludes, not to the soul’s communion with the saints, but to its communion with the saints’ God. The passage will then be read,—

“ If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship—God with us, and we with him.” Just as our blessed Saviour saith,—“ If a man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” Or, as is expressed in the Epistle from which I have my text, iii. chapter, 24th verse—“ And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him.” Or, in the same Epistle, ii. chapter, 7th verse—“ If that which you have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye, also, shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.” For what is the purport of these passages, but that conveyed in the words—“ if we walk in the light as our God is in the light, we have fellowship one with one another : God with us, and we with him.”

This view of the passage is borne out by the fact, that in some old manuscript copies of the Scripture, instead of the word *ἀλλήλων*, which we translate “ one with another,” we find the word *αὐτοῦ*, which must be of course translated “ him :” —and it is to be inferred from the evident antithesis which the words, on which we are remark-

ing, would then afford to the language of the 6th verse, "If we say that we have fellowship with *him*, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth." This is the former proposition. The antithesis is this, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with him; that is, we really enjoy, what in the other case we falsely pretend to." And oh! it is a glorious and elevating view this, of which we should be sorry to lose a single confirmation, though it rests not upon this solitary text; for we have not a doctrine which is more calculated to lift up the soul in hope, and to stimulate it to godliness,—to make it love God, and to make it like God. The proof of our having fellowship with God, is to be found in that Christian transparency of conduct, through which we may trace the anatomy of a regenerated heart;—and the way to preserve this transparency undimmed, is to abide in the sunny and unclouded atmosphere of a God, who is essential light, and in whom is no darkness at all.

Now how are we to do so;—to walk and live in that atmosphere of light, in which every object will reflect God's image, and in which we



may increase and perpetuate our conformity to him? What more important question can arise to the mind of a Christian, than that, on the answer to which his personal holiness, and present and eventual happiness depend?

I.—I reply, in the first place, by abiding in Jesus Christ. As I have already shewn, it is by an interest in him, that we are first introduced to communion with God:—it is by abiding in him that we are to be preserved in it. It is thus that we shall maintain our communion with God, and be preserved from sinning against him. Thus the Evangelist, “He that hath the Son hath life.” “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in Him, and He in God.” “Whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not.” And then again, in his tenderness for his converts, and his solicitude for their spiritual well being, he exclaims, “And now, little children abide in him, that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him, at his coming.” What are all these asseverations, but an echo of that heavenly voice which fell on his own ears, in the upper room at

Jerusalem, as he lay on his Redeemer's breast : what but the remembered note of that mingled consolation and warning, in which his Lord pourtrayed the mystical union and mutual love betwixt himself and his members, under the parable of the vine. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abideth not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withered."

You have sometimes, my beloved, seen a branch, laden with clusters of autumnal fruit, that has been broken from the parent stem. How soon it pines and dies away—the leaves wither—the fruit shrivels up—it is good for nothing—the spring and the summer promise are in vain—it is gathered and cast into the fire and burned. This was the image that would occur to the disciples as Jesus spoke. And how deeply must they have felt the similitude, as they sat with their Lord at table, having just

heard him announce that he was about to leave them. Oh! how they must have crept and clustered around him, that they might assure themselves he was still amongst them, and might find, under the covert of his wings, a moment's shelter from the trials and temptations that were so soon to assail them.

And yet never was the blessed Jesus nearer his disciples, than after their bodily eyes had ceased to look on him, and the heavens had concealed him from their sight, and he had sat down on the right hand of God. For it was then that he poured on them that Spirit, which enabled them to cleave to him, and receive out of his fulness,—and sent them forth, no longer timid and faithless, but fired with the martyr's courage, and rejoicing, like giants, to run their course.

It will be the same with us of the present day, who look up to him in godly affiance, and seek to abide in him by living faith. We are no less the objects of his care, because he is hid from the eye of sense; and just in proportion as we can realize and abide in our union with him, shall we be preserved in that

fellowship with *his* Father and *our* Father, which is to bless us and to save us.

Let nothing, therefore, separate us from the Saviour, or create a strangeness in our hearts towards him. It is the grand endeavour of the adversary to effect this; and it matters little to him, whether it be by inflating us with self-righteous confidence, or depressing us in despair. We are safer, even when we are brought the lowest in the ashes of abasement through conscious unworthiness, so that we cling to Jesus, hoping against hope,—than when, in the flush of some fancied triumph over Satan, we think we may for a moment walk alone. The whole discipline of the covenant of grace is to shew us this. We may learn it from, perhaps, the most appropriate emblem of a Christian that can be furnished. When is it that the little nursling is the safest? When he totters along in the pride of being able to walk alone;—or when, under the influence of some sudden fright, he clings to the guardian arm, and buries his head in the guardian bosom?—Is it not so with the Christian? Let him abide in his Saviour, and he is safe. Let any cause whatever separate him

for a moment, from him,—and he is driven to and fro like a bark let loose from its moorings. The cord that linked him in fellowship to God is broken, and he is for awhile abandoned to the mercy of the winds and waves, without a rudder or a pilot. Therefore, if we would maintain our fellowship with the Father we must abide in Jesus Christ.

II. Secondly, we must cherish and improve the blessed influences of the Divine Spirit. “Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.” The same witness which assures to the believer that he has been grafted into fellowship with God, is to maintain that fellowship, and to testify to its continuance. He must himself carry on the work he has begun,—and by moulding and maturing our affections, produce in us that conformity to God, in sentiment and character, in which we have already seen, that the communion of the soul with God consists. If we would walk with God in light, as he is in the light, we must watch for the whispers of that voice in which he speaks to our souls. We must not provoke, or

quench that Holy Spirit whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption. For it is according to the teaching of that anointing wherewith he visits us, that we are to abide in God. Oh! are we acquainted with those mystic breathings, in which our heavenly Father speaks to the hearts of his children! Have we felt within us the wellings of that heavenly water that springeth up unto everlasting life? Has the Spirit ever testified to our spirits that we are the children of God; and are we now under his teaching and following his guidance? Let us cherish and cultivate this mystic communion, and wait for it as Adam did for the voice of God, when it came wafted on the perfumed breezes of the garden. For it is *by* the Spirit, *through* the Saviour, that we are to have access to the Father. It is by abiding in the Saviour, and following the suasions of the Comforter, that we are to walk with God in light,—in the sunny smiles of his countenance, and in the holy and rejoicing sense of our intimacy with him. It is thus that we shall be refreshed and built up as living temples unto God,—that we shall have fellowship

with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. With Christ's righteousness about us, and his Spirit in our hearts, we shall live in light, and in the sense of it. In the consciousness of our union with the Father we shall be both lifted above the world of sense, and kept from the errors in doctrine to which the unstable and carnal are exposed. For the anointing of the Holy One, which we have received from him, shall abide in us, and shall teach us all things. We shall have both the title to Heaven in Christ's righteousness imputed, and the qualification for heaven in Christ's Spirit inherent. We shall have both the earnest of the future inheritance, and a security for its ultimate possession. We shall know, as a matter of increased assurance, that we are of God, and have fellowship with him—that the Son of God has come, and has given us an understanding—that we know him that is true, and are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. And this is the true God and everlasting life.

III. I consider, thirdly, that if we would maintain fellowship with God, we must walk

in the light of his truth. "Let that, therefore, abide in you," saith St. John, "which you have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye, also, shall continue in the Son and in the Father." And again, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." The Apostle knew that the truth as it is in Jesus, was the only foundation of practical holiness, and the only source of that spiritual life which links the soul in fellowship with God.

If we would learn the importance of accurate views in religion, we need only go to that very Evangelist, who dwells with such unction and tenderness upon their practical fruits. None more earnest, than John the Beloved, to enforce the claims of the commandment,—none more energetic in upholding the orthodox doctrine. He knew that without works faith is dead; but then he knew too, that without faith there could be no works; that an unstable edifice implied a faulty foundation,



and that if you would have the fruit good, you must make the tree good.

It is the union of orthodoxy and unction in St. John, that makes his writings so edifying and so delightful. He appeals at one moment to the creed, and at another to the conduct, as a proof of the fellowship on which he is insisting. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God:"—here is the need of an orthodox doctrine. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin:"—here is the need of a personal holiness. And to view both truths in connection, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world:" "who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God." It was the very disciple that had companied most with Jesus, and enjoyed most of his friendship,—and who knew that there could be no fellowship with him, except on the ground of a mutual holiness,—who laid such stress upon a knowledge of the truth and a continuance in it. Who was ever more an enemy to the spurious liberality, which would represent all differences in creed as unimportant, than that Apostle who had drank most largely of his

Master's spirit. Who ever dealt such death-blows to the Socinian heresy, as he did. It was the same son of love, who, when he had strength for no more, exclaimed "little children love one another," who when the heresiarch Cerinthus entered the bath where he was, left it in alarm, lest the roof should fall on him. It was his love of souls, and his knowledge that error endangered these, which dictated his warning to the elect lady, in his second Epistle, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house: neither bid him God speed. For he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds." Oh! may we learn of him, that nothing may appear to us a trifling error, which is a deviation from Scriptural truth. And let us remember that his warning and exhortation in this respect, are nothing but a comment on those words of our Saviour, which he himself records, "If ye continue in my words, then are ye my disciples indeed."—"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith as ye have been taught, abounding therein with

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thankfulness. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead bodily, and ye are complete in him."

IV. I consider, fourthly, that if we would have fellowship with the Father, we must walk in the light of his commandments. I have already touched on the argument. It is a self-evident proposition. It is involved in all that has gone before. Without holiness, we have seen, there can be no fellowship with God,—and holiness implies a regard to the commandment. It is by obeying God that we are to be made like him, and to ascertain our relationship to him. "Jesus answered and said, if a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Again, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." The proof that we know God at all must be furnished by our observance of his law. "For hereby we do

know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." There is a testimony in every man's heart that cries out against the monstrous idea that God can regard him with complacency while he is living in sin,—or that there can be either present fellowship or future association with him, unless his law be had in honour.

For what is it that saves us, but the faith, which by realizing the gracious and endearing character of God, causes the soul to love him ; and how can we be said to love God if we cast his positive commands behind our back ? "Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected : hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."

What more need I add to this ? Oh, brethren beloved, may God make his commandments dear to us ! We shall never be happy, but in proportion as we keep them. May we be able to say, with David—" Oh, how I love

thy law !" And, again : " Thy law is my delight." May we pray with him : " Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end." And again : " Make me to go in the path of thy commandments ; for therein is my delight." And may we find that our fellowship with God is the means of making us holy, and our holiness is the means of deepening and cementing our fellowship ! May we walk in the light, as he is in the light, that we may have communion together : God with us, and we with God. And may every fresh discovery of his perfections, and every nearer approach to his person, be the means of effecting our conformity to him !

The further consideration of the text will be taken up in my next discourse.

## LECTURE VII.

### ON MAINTAINING FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER.

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*If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.*—1 JOHN i. 7.

IN my morning discourse, I dwelt at length upon certain methods, by which the soul may be maintained in that holy fellowship with God, which it is the object of the economy of grace to promote. I purpose, at present, considering the use of some of those ordinary means of grace, which God has appointed for the same gracious purpose. And I shall conclude by remarking on that expiatory fountain which is always open, and is available for the sins of the believer, as well as for the remission of his guilt at conversion.

It is obvious, that our communion with God in this world, must be maintained by outward acts, which may both serve, as indicative of our dependence upon him, and be, like Jacob's ladder, a means of bringing heaven and earth together. To maintain fellowship with any one, we must possess the means of exchanging thoughts: we must both transmit and receive communications,—and must feel that if time and space divide us, there is still a mean by which our thoughts and wishes may be made known to one another, and our mutual sympathies may be discovered and promoted. There must be, in short, some way, in which the actual separation may be lost sight of, and we may feel that we understand one another, and that our hearts beat and chime together in mutual accord.

Now it would appear that prayer, an acquaintance with God's truth, the sacramental ordinances, and communion with the christian brotherhood constitute the chief means of grace, by which the believer is, in this world, to maintain his intercourse with heaven.

I shall say a few words on each of these points, and I pray God, that they may be such

as will be approved by him, and will so subserve his cause.

To begin with prayer. Need I say, that every one who would enjoy fellowship with God, will avail himself of this, which is his highest, and ought to be his dearest, privilege. We may learn this, both from the nature of our relation to God, and from the spirit which he engenders in every converted heart. Prayer is the posture of want and dependance,—it is the expression of desire, of reliance, of thankfulness,—it is the language of lowliness and love, into which every soul that is alive to God, spontaneously breaks. It is so congenial to a creature, that there is not an articulate speech, which has not been employed in invocation and praise,—to ask for benefits, or deprecate calamities, or acknowledge mercies: and even without the aid of language, the heart will find a means to utter its complaint, or its petition, or its gratitude to heaven; and its prayer obtain vent in the form of a sigh, or a groan, or a gesture, or a tear.

It would seem that prayer is, of all others, the most distinctive characteristic of man in this world; for the angels need not pray, and the



devils will not pray, and the condemned souls cannot pray. But man prays,—even when his heart is little interested in his suit,—from the vague and instinctive sense which needs and craves support. I speak not, of course, of those who so bely their nature, as to deny the existence of a God ; though it will be found that even men who have boasted their atheism, have been discovered on their knees, and heard to break forth into ejaculatory prayer, in moments of alarm and panic.

Perhaps there never was a being endowed with intellect, even in the most benighted state, who did not either adopt or invent some means of communication with that invisible intelligence, whose existence is recognized even in the idolatry which caricatures and dishonours him. And in the case of him who enjoys a revelation, which discovers God as willing and waiting to be gracious,—to say that a man is a Christian is to imply that he prays ; that he avails himself of the access which he is told is always open, and uses a means of fellowship with heaven so easy and so immediate. With the believer in Jesus Christ, who has been

the subject of a renewing change, prayer, I might say, is the result of a species of moral impulse, which he cannot restrain,—in which God in the heart speaks to God on a throne of grace. When Christ would denote the conversion of Saul, he says, “Behold, he prayeth,” and when Paul would himself describe the effect of regeneration on another, he says, “and because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” The instantaneous result of conversion in any heart is to lift it up in prayer to God. “I will arise,” saith the prodigal, “and go to my father, and will say unto him.” He is no sooner awakened to a sense of his relationship, and of the duties and privileges it involves, than he resolves to pray. In taking words into his mouth, he is only following the Divine impulse, which bids him seek from the paternal bosom that sympathy, which he had sought elsewhere in vain.

But God not only implants the inclination to pray, which is of course the greatest of all encouragements to do so;—for where he gives a desire to ask, he must have before determined to com-

ply. He commands prayer as a duty, as well as sanctions it as a privilege. And he does so, because he has appointed it to be the means of associating the soul with himself, and of thus facilitating and forwarding the fellowship, which is his ultimate object. Prayer is, indeed, the very breath of the Divine life: there can be no communion with God without it; and all its parts, invocation, confession, supplication, praise and thanksgiving, necessarily enter into the most undefined idea of the fellowship with Deity into which we are called. To hold communion with God,—whether it be in the closet or the church, the wilderness or the city,—we must converse with God; and though we may do so without the aspiration embodying itself in language; yet even in the abstracted meditation, or the active service,—there will be in the mute exercise of faith, or the outward act of duty, such a devotional sentiment as we should rightly denominate prayer. And it will be the experience of every Christian, that just in proportion as he is much in prayer, will he be assimilated to God in sentiment and conduct. If any thing is allowed to interfere with devotional exercise,

just so far will the inward graces suffer. He who has little fellowship with God in worship, will have slight communion with him in those scenes, which so often try the faith, and distract the mind, of the devoutest Christian. It is where the flame on the altar is cherished in the closet, and the family, and the sanctuary, that God will cause a man's face to shine, and his profiting to appear unto all men. He that lives much in the light of prayer, will have largest fellowship with the Father, and reflect his image most in the world. It was the saying of a holy man now with God, that no unfair estimate of the religion of a family might be formed from the manner in which social worship was conducted ; and the remark might be so extended, as to apply to every species of devotion, whether public or private, in which the soul approaches God. Therefore it will be allowed by all who desire to walk with God, and enjoy communion with him, that they must live much in a spirit of prayer.

II.—Need I urge, in the second place, that they must maintain their fellowship with Heaven by frequent and prayerful study of the

inspired Word. When we pray to God we are addressing him; when we are reading his Word, we are listening to him. Of course, there can be no interchange of mind kept up, without the employment of both these means. In a perusal of the Scriptures, we are to find both the argument and the matter for prayer; and are also to receive the answer to it from God. We are to learn both what we are to ask for, and what we are to expect; both what we need and what God is disposed to bestow. When we take the sacred volume in our hand, we are in a peculiar manner, entering into the very presence chamber of the Almighty, and inviting a communication from him. Oh! that we could always feel this. We are imitating the posture, and borrowing the language of the infant Samuel, when he said "Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth." And as our eyes follow the inspired page, or our ears listen to it when read by others, we ought to feel that these are the utterances of Deity, which strike upon the senses,—and are as much to be revered and treasured up, as if they were orally addressed to us from a cloudy canopy, and we heard the

voice of the Eternal borne to our ears, as it once broke upon the solitude of Eden.

And what an unspeakable boon is the word of God when thus considered ;—when apart from the vehicle through which its communications are transmitted to our organs, we realize it as the literal and lively oracles of the Almighty mind. We can appreciate the benefit of such a transcript, when it bears to us from distant shores the communication of some absent friend. How precious are the lines which trace his sentiments, which tell us of his welfare, which assure us of his unabated love ! How we cherish and bear them about with us, and bless the magic characters which can thus waft a sigh, or a wish, or an endearment from Indus to the Pole. And shall we less prize a similar communication, when it comes down to us from Heaven ; when it conveys the sentiments of our God ; when it bespeaks, after the fashion of human friendship, a place in our hearts. Oh ! to contrast the interest with which the former manuscript is regarded, with the apathy with which we read the Epistle of our Eternal friend. The former,

carried in the bosom—placed beneath the pillow—read and re-read in solitude—blotted with tears, and pressed with the kisses of an idle transport; while, all the time, the fingers which inscribed the characters may be cold in death, or the heart which dictated them may have changed. And the word which tells us of a love, that neither time nor distance can abate; which handles themes, on which our eternity depends,—which brings tidings of the heavenly country, and informs us how we may travel thither—with how cold an eye, and how apathetic a bosom can we behold it; and how often do we omit altogether the perusal of its pages!

Oh! do we prize our relationship to God—do we desire to cultivate our fellowship with him—would we imbibe his sentiments, and borrow the complexion of his mind. Then we shall not neglect the perusal of a book which conveys the transcript of his very heart; which is the mighty instrument for assimilating us to him, and stamping on us the impression of the heavenly character. We shall feel the inestimable blessing of a means of grace, to which we can retire from the secularizing and

defiling contact of the world, so as to be alone with God,—where we can sit with him all enshrined in an atmosphere of holiness, solacing our hearts with congenial thoughts, and finding that, as we behold in this glass the glory of God, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

And here I may remark, that whatever may be urged on the subject of private devotion, is equally applicable to the public service of the sanctuary. The obligation to secret worship involves the spiritual improvement of those social privileges, which, by uniting Christians in one common approach to God, unite our human sympathies in the cause of Heaven. He who prays to God in private, will rejoice to unite his aspirations with those of fellow-worshippers in the temple—he who feels it a duty and a solace to search the Scriptures in the closet, will prize the living commentary that is furnished from the pulpit. And the Sabbath,—while it is revered and valued for its own sake, as a Divine appointment, and as a means of spiritual meditation and repose,—will be



doubly dear, as summoning us to associate with thousands in those observances, which have strengthened and cheered our hearts in solitude.

I have spoken of the ordinance of prayer, and of an acquaintance with the Scriptures, as important and obvious means of fostering that fellowship with God, for which I have been pleading. I have yet to speak of the sacramental rites which our Lord appointed for this very end. It is of course impossible, in a single discourse, to do more than allude to topics, which I must trust to your afterwards meditating on in private. But in an enumeration of the most obvious channels of communion with the Father, it would be impossible to omit either the sacrament of Baptism,—in which the candidate for Christian privilege is first taken into covenant with the Trinity,—or the ordinance of the table, which speaks to us so touchingly of God's love, and is so lively a means of cherishing our fellowship with him. I need not here repeat my sentiments on baptism, which, I believe, are the same as those of every spiritual churchman before me. I need only say

that I hold it to be a high and blessed privilege to which the parent should rejoice to bring his child, and which *may be* the channel of a regenerating and saving change. It is thus held forth in the standards of our church ; to esteem it less, would be to deprive it of its charter as a sacrament of God ; and to esteem it more, would be to invest it with the character of a spell. It is designed by God to be the consecrated vehicle of a spiritual change ; and may often be the means of translating even the unconscious babe into spiritual fellowship with God. To admit this, is only to admit that children dying in infancy may be saved : for to this end they must be regenerated ; and if we allow that a moral change can be effected on the mind of a babe, we need not, surely, dispute, that the sacrament of baptism may be sometimes the outward means of effecting it.

And then as to the ordinance of the table,—who, that has enjoyed any measure of Divine life, has not felt this to be an effectual means of cherishing and increasing it ? Do our hearts not bless the Lord for that dying legacy in which He bequeathed to us such a memorial of

his love, and such a means of continued, and increasing communion with him? What child of God has not found his heart knit to the Saviour in the Sacrament of the Supper,—and, feeding by faith on the mystical body into which he is ingrafted,—felt that Christ's flesh was meat indeed, and Christ's blood drink indeed? Is it more than the truth to say,—that as we have knelt at the table, our hearts have sometimes made us like the chariots of Amminadab—that we have pierced the beatific vision,—that time and space have been for a while annihilated,—and we have felt ourselves on the confines of the celestial city, and in the immediate presence of our God? Do we not admit that we have sometimes enjoyed nearer and sweeter fellowship with Him at the table, than have visited our souls at less hallowed moments? And shall we not continue to cultivate such a channel of fellowship with the Father, and accustom ourselves to expect from it spiritual gifts and blessings?

And here I may observe upon the Divine consideration in an appointment which is the means of refreshing the soul, not only with a

fellowship with God, but also with our brethren. It is thus that the Lord's Supper is subservient to that other means of grace, to which I have just alluded. It introduces us first into fellowship with our common head, and then to brotherly communion with each other. It knits the soul first to Christ, and then to all, of whom he is the Surety and the Saviour. And, by means of the association, which it thus promotes amongst the members of Christ's body, it furthers their individual fellowship with the Father. Of this we have many of us enjoyed personal experience, when, as we have been talking one with another by the way—like the disciples on their Sabbath journey to Emmaus—the Lord himself has drawn near and joined himself to us;—or, when, as we have met together in public, or social worship, the blessed Spirit has descended on us to comfort and enlighten us, as he once did in fiery tongues on the day of Pentecost. Who has not felt his heart enlarged, and his faith strengthened, and his spiritual affections ripened, by that communion with dear brethren in the Lord, with which he has at times been favoured? Has

his intercourse with Christian friends, not been at times to him like an oasis in the desert,—as the sound of gushing waters in the sterile and howling wilderness? And as they sat and communed together, talking of their common God, and fortifying one another in the faith—or kneeling together in social prayer,—has he not felt that it was a blessed thing to be a Christian, and that the disciple of Jesus has enjoyments with which a stranger doth not intermeddle?

Oh! why is it not now with us, as it once was in the Apostle's day, when the multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul, and great grace was upon them all:—or as in those succeeding days of primitive, dear primitive Christianity, when the Pagan reviler, as he lowered on the little band, was constrained to exclaim, How these Christians love one another! We read of such fellowship of heart—why may we not realize it? It may be encountered, I am told, in some of those dells of Switzerland, or the Vaudois, where luxury and pride have not contaminated the virgin heart, and persecution without the

fold has cemented union within it. And verily, when I have read of these things, I have panted after such a green and blessed spot, and deemed that I should be glad to share the mountaineer's hardships and privations, if I might partake his spirit. And then I have asked myself, why might not those who love the same Master, and feed on the same promises, and anticipate the same common home for ever,—oh! why might they not realize the same Christian communion in the walled and crowded city, as in the Alpine wilderness? If those who are thirsting for the honours and advantages of this world, and tearing one another in the strife of the mart, or the political arena, live at variance, hateful and hating one another,—why might not they who speak the same language, and have one common head, be as brethren, even amidst the dwellings of Babel? Why does iniquity abound, but because the love of many is grown cold? And when I have asked these questions of myself, and had no answer, but that it is not so,—and that there is almost as little fellowship within the church, as there is without it; why

then I have thought that this distempered atmosphere must be purged by coming tempests; and that God will bring upon us those calamities which, by driving us to a common stronghold, will make us draw and cluster together.

For are we not deceiving ourselves, if we think that we love God, and love not the brethren? What does John,—who lay on the Redeemer's bosom, and learnt his theology from his Redeemer's lips,—what does he say? "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? This commandment have we received from him, that he that loveth God should love his brother also." "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."—What shall we say then? "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time.

If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us."

But I must pass to the portion of the subject which is yet behind. I have now expounded some of the means by which the Christian's fellowship with God is to be maintained. Still there will be some here, who will complain that they have at present little enjoyment of that communion with the Father, which I have been enforcing; that there is a strangeness between their souls and God; that they are at times in doubt whether they have ever come to him by a saving change, through faith in his dear Son. And they will perhaps acknowledge,—if they are pressed,—that the secret cause of their distrust consists in the consciousness of sins, that have sullied their profession, and wounded their conscience. Do I say that such persons have not cause to mourn,—that there is not a cause to question their relationship,—that sin indulged ought not to cloud their hopes and destroy their joy? No, I cannot be so unfaithful; for God has himself told us, that it is by keeping his commandments that we are to abide in him,—and that if our heart condemn



us, he is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things ; that it is by walking in the light that we are to maintain the sense of our fellowship, and to assure our hearts before him. I do not say that they have not cause to be depressed ;—but I can point them to a fountain in which, though they have sinned, and dealt unfaithfully with God, he will remit all their sins.

It is our commission to do so, which distinguishes us as ministers of the gospel. We have first to urge on the believer, that he walk in light :—but if he sin, we have the expiatory fountain to point to, in which his sins may be drowned and cleansed away. “ My little children,” saith the apostle, “ these things I write unto you, that ye sin not :” the object of the fellowship, and the way to maintain it, is that we sin not. But if any man sin, (as who does not ?) shall he despair ? No ! “ if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins.” What is this declaration, but an echo of the text, “ If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with

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another, and the blood of Jesus Christ our Lord cleanseth us from all sin."

Here is the complete provision of the economy of grace. First, as I said this morning, a motive, and preservative, and exhortation, against sin; and secondly, a provision for sin. The two make up a complete salvation. Were either wanting, there would be no salvation. An economy which either provided an expiation for sin, without an obligation to holiness,—or an obligation to holiness without a provision for sin, would be unworthy of God, and useless to the creature. It is when both are united,—as they are so harmoniously in the text,—that we see that the economy is indeed Divine, and is the power of God, and the wisdom of God unto salvation. Therefore, if any one by sin has dimmed his hope, and clouded his sense of fellowship with heaven,—I would say, take warning from the past. You can have no fellowship with God, unless you walk in the light. You have fallen into sin, because you were remiss in maintaining communion with your God; you followed Christ far off, and were tempted, and overcome. Learn to walk more softly in time to come. But do

not despond. You will thus only serve Satan's end. The way to maintain fellowship is, to walk in light;—the way to recover it is, to apply to the blood of Jesus Christ, which cleanseth from all sin.

But again, there are those who have never experienced any thing at all of what I have been describing; but who may perhaps have been brought, to-night, to ask, How may I be admitted into communion with the Highest? The answer is, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. Wash in it, and you will leave the leprosy of your guilt behind you. Like the gifted waters of Jordan it will restore you to spiritual health, and qualify you to stand before the King. The Son of God is lifted up: believe in him, and you shall be saved: his blood will cleanse you; his righteousness invest you with a title to approach God with filial confidence; his Spirit will enable you to address him, and cry to him, Abba, Father. You will discover in the Saviour all that is to qualify you for that fellowship to which we invite you. May God enable you to approve our testimony. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto

you, that ye also may have fellowship with us.”  
And may the Spirit of God accompany this  
message, so that you may be all able to say,  
“Truly our fellowship is with the Father and  
with his Son Jesus Christ.”

## LECTURE VIII.

### ON THE PERPETUITY OF THE FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER.

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*And now little children, abide in him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.—*  
1 JOHN ii. 28.

WE shall find in Scripture that encouragements to faith are always accompanied by exhortations to holiness, and that the duty invariably waits upon the privilege as a natural and necessary consequence. Indeed, as we may observe, the privilege is chiefly dwelt on as a means of qualifying the soul for the duty, and constraining it to its performance. The object of God in his Gospel implies this:—it is to disengage us from the love and practice of all evil, that we may be fitted for endless

communion with himself in heaven ; and his grace brings salvation by weaning us from all iniquity, and purifying us as a peculiar people, zealous of all good works.

If the Gospel does not change the heart and influence the conduct, it remains, as far as we are concerned, a mere dead letter. It may be felt by others to be a mighty instrument in the hand of the Spirit,—but in the individual instance it has not accomplished its purpose. It may be the power of God, and the wisdom of God unto salvation to every one that believeth,—but in our case it has not been really believed,—and therefore is not experienced in its renewing wisdom and recreating power. It may have gratified the intellect by its acknowledged adaptation to the work for which it is designed ; and even affected the heart by the sublimity and pathos of the facts which it embraces ; but for any purpose of practical or eventual benefit it has been altogether inefficacious. Nay, rather, inasmuch as it has been trifled with and abused, it will be found to have deepened guilt, and accumulated wrath against the day of wrath.

Still it can never be maintained as an argument against the gospel, that it sometimes fails of its purpose: for we admit that it is only when applied by the Divine Spirit to the heart, so as to be received in the love of it, that it will be found a savour of life. Neither will its occasional abuse, by insincere and licentious professors, be considered as a proof that its doctrines necessarily lead to encourage a lax and careless conduct. On the contrary, it may be observed, that whenever a professor of evangelical religion is found to be wanting in practical morality, it is immediately felt that he has been untrue to his principles, and a cry of hypocrisy is raised against him. What stronger evidence can be afforded that a profession of gospel truth is felt, even by those who condemn the system, to imply an obligation to holy living?

Still there are some doctrines, commonly termed Evangelical, of which it is contended that the tendency is to weaken the moral sanction. One of these is, the perpetuity of faith in the elect, or, as it is more generally designated, the perseverance of the saints. In concluding a series of discourses on the be-

liever's fellowship with God, I could not avoid touching on this doctrine. I feel it myself to be a blessed and essential feature of the gospel scheme, and an all-important provision of the economy of grace : to constitute, in fact, the crowning glory of the fabric, and to give to it at once beauty and security. Were it not for this doctrine, indeed, there would be no guarantee for the ultimate glory of God in the salvation of his redeemed and adopted child. The whole plan of our redemption from sin and hell would be periled upon a peradventure; and it would have been within the verge of a possibility that the joint and glorious enterprise of the Eternal Trinity should have been in vain. Then could not the blessed Jesus, in reference to his work *for* his people, and *in* them, have exclaimed, " I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." Then could he not have described that influence which he imparts, as a well of water springing up unto *everlasting* life. Then could he not have comforted them with the assurance, " Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good plea-



sure to give you the kingdom." Neither could the Apostle have asserted, that nothing could separate the real believer from the love of Christ; or have rested himself in the assurance that a crown of rejoicing awaited him; and that, that which he had committed unto Christ should be kept until the day of redemption. And as to the personal experience of the believer,—it would have been found, that in losing his confidence in the stability of the covenant, he would have been deprived of one of his strongest incitements to consistent continuance in well-doing; as well as of his greatest cordial in seasons of temptation and conflict. Were he not confident of this very thing, that he which had begun a good work in him, would perform it until the day of Jesus Christ,—where would be his shelter in trouble,—or what the promise that would whisper peace amid the tremors of conscious unworthiness and weakness? Instead of contributing to the moral improvement and stability of the Christian, the removal of the doctrine would have left the soul paralyzed with a sense of its constant insecurity, and the prey of a thousand

misgivings. When difficulties and discouragements arose, faith would have had no foundation to build on ; and the daily insight which a believer gains into his own waywardness and pollutions, would have driven him not to the bosom of a covenant God, but into the arms of despair.

Then as to the fears which may be entertained of the doctrine,—from an impression that it may be perverted by presumptuous confidence,—these, we conceive, proceed from misconception, and an ignorance of the securities by which the truth is fenced. The privilege which it communicates is restricted to the possession of a character, which is rigidly and clearly defined. The actual comfort of the privilege, must therefore depend on the scriptural evidence of a regenerated nature.

It is he only, who is conscious of the *existence* of a Divine principle in his heart, who can look to the *continuance* of this principle to the end. The *perpetuity of faith* implies the *existent actings of faith* : the perseverance of the saints implies a perseverance in holiness.

If we only turn to any of the passages in holy writ, where the doctrine of final perseverance is enforced, we shall find that they invariably presuppose the regeneration and sanctification of those to whom the privilege is annexed. Thus in that passage in St. John to which I have already alluded,—where our Saviour speaks of the security of those few sheep whom he tends in the moral wilderness,—their character is described in terms which debar the unregenerate and unholy from the participation in a promise, which is restricted to those, who “know Christ’s voice, and follow him.” So in the passage in the Epistle to the Romans,—in which it is argued that nothing shall separate the believer from the love of Christ,—we find that the believer has been already portrayed, as one who walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; who is led by the Spirit of God; who has received the Spirit of adoption; with whose spirit, the Spirit testifies that he is a child of God. We find that the predestination,—on which the doctrine of perseverance turns,—is a predestination to a character, as the introduction to a portion; that we must be conformed to the image of

Christ, in order that we may be partakers of his glory.

Is Paul confident of the Philippians, that he which hath begun a good work, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ ; do we not see that the performance of the work presupposes that it has already commenced. And what is the evidence that such beginning there has been ? Why,—that both in the apostle's bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, they have been partakers of his grace. Is he equally assured of the election of the Thessalonian converts,—that it is of God ;—are not the grounds of this assurance stated ? He appeals to their “ work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope,” as denoting their adoption unto the family of God, and saving interest in Jesus Christ.

What more can we require to prove that there is nothing in the doctrine to encourage a licentious presumption ; that whatever attaints the character, destroys the confidence ; that if we do not present the features of the heavenly family, we can have no claim to a share in privileges confined to them ? And why

should we deprive the Christian of a comfort which clearly belongs to him,—because an unbeliever, in the face of Scripture which positively excludes him, may sometimes prefer an unfounded plea?

We must have all felt that there is no portion of Holy Writ in which the privileges and security of the Christian are more forcibly and feelingly unfolded, than in the first Epistle of St. John. And yet there is none,—as we have had abundant opportunities recently of observing,—in which these privileges are more rigidly guarded from misconception or abuse. We have seen the tenderness and warmth with which St. John commends that fellowship with the Father for which he is pleading. We have seen both from his positive statements, and from a development of the argument which they embrace, that a state of sin is incompatible with fellowship with God,—that communion with him can be maintained only on the ground of a conformity to his nature.

Now it has been my endeavour, in this series of discourses, to shew how this conformity may be obtained, and how it is to be increased and

cherished. I have sought to exhibit Christ in his all-sufficiency, as Saviour; and the Holy Spirit in his power, as the renovator of our fallen nature. And I have dwelt at length upon those ordinary means of grace which God has appointed for our progress and perseverance in holiness.

In conclusion, I feel I could not more appropriately or effectually address you, than in the Apostle's graceful and affectionate exhortation, "And now, little children, abide in him, that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming."

We might conceive the Apostle, as he uttered these words, in the act of concluding his tender and touching discourse, and dismissing his much loved hearers. He had told them of the privileges to which they were invited; and furnished sufficient tests, by which they might individually authenticate their state as Christians. He had urged on them an adherence to the doctrine, and a continuance in the commandment; had warned them against self-deception, against the love of this world, against heretical opinions. In conclusion, he sums up all, in an affectionate

and comprehensive exhortation. "And now, little children," above all,—as my last weighty and solemn admonition,—remember, whatever difficulties you encounter, whatever trials await you,—“abide you in him, that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.”

We have here,

I.—An exhortation, “Abide in him.”

II.—The object of the exhortation, “That, when he shall appear, we may have confidence; and not be ashamed before him at his coming.”

I shall, by the Divine permission, say a few words on either of these points, and thus take leave, for the present, of a subject, which I trust you have found beneficial; and in which I pray God we may all possess a personal and increasing interest.

I.—The Apostle’s charge conveys a lesson, both to those who may this day be rejoicing in a sense of their communion with God; and also to those who are yet far off, but whom the gospel is designed to bring in.

To the former the Apostle says, Have you experienced anything of that fellowship with the

Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, of which I have been speaking? Do you feel that you have had access, by the Spirit, to the Father, through the Son? Can you say that you dwell in him, and he in you; that he hath given you of his Spirit; that the witness is in yourselves? Supposing this,—the way to maintain this fellowship, and to be blessed with the consciousness of it, is to abide in Jesus Christ.—Again, to the unregenerate he says,—would you know how this holy and ennobling fellowship with God is to be obtained; how you are to be delivered from a state of condemnation and wrath, and reconciled to God? You must seek acceptance through the beloved; you must be ingrafted into Christ by faith, and by faith live on, and abide in him.

It is our union with the Son, which is to preserve our fellowship with the Father. Because he lives, we shall live also.

1.—It is by this we are at first to ascertain and establish our fellowship. “Whosoever,” saith St. John, “believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.” Again, “Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every Spirit that confesseth that



Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God." And again, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself. He that hath the Son, hath life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." We can have no grounds for supposing that we are within the pale of the covenant,—that God is our Father,—that heaven is our home,—unless we have been ingrafted into Jesus, and he has been welcomed by us as chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely; unless we can say that he is all our salvation, and all our desire. Do we feel this? can we say this?

2.—It is by abiding in Christ, that we are to be preserved from error. We have already seen how we are to ascertain that a spirit is of God. Does it testify of Christ, so as to exhibit him, and crown him Lord of all? If so, it is a spirit come of God. For this is to be our constant criterion of a doctrine:—whatever depreciates this work of the incarnate Saviour, or leads the soul to build on any thing in prefer-

ence to the sure foundation he has laid, is not of God. "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God ; he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." The importance of evangelical truth is established by the fact that the tendency of error is to separate us from God, to interrupt our fellowship with him. But to be kept from error we must abide in Christ. When we are looking to, and living on him,—seeking in all things his glory, and expecting to receive out of his fulness,—we are treading on consecrated ground, and breathing a heavenly atmosphere, and are preserved, in virtue of our affinity to Jesus, from the inroads and contagion of error. Into this impregnable enclosure heresy shall not come, nor shoot its arrows there. Our sympathy with the Saviour is a shield from all the fiery darts of the wicked one. We dwell on high, our defence is the munition of rocks ; bread shall be given us, our waters shall be sure. Are our minds ever agitated by the conflicting opinions that may be raging around us ; and when we see many who once thought with us, deviating into the bye-ways

of strange and pernicious doctrines,—do we begin to tremble for ourselves, lest our faith too should be subverted? Let us abide in Jesus; and let every blast of strange doctrine only drive us closer unto him. Hear his own soothing admonition, “Let not your hearts be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me.” It is by clinging to him, that we shall be kept by the power of God unto salvation; and if error without drive us to Christ, it will be overruled for a blessing. May we be as those parasitick plants, whose roots are only more clingingly intertwined in the rocky fissures, by the hurricanes that sway them on their mountain bed!

3.—But the result of our union with the Saviour will appear, not merely in our continuance in the doctrine, but also in our adherence to the commandment. By abiding in Christ we shall be kept from sinning. “Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” “Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not.” “He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself so to walk even as he walked.” Our union with the Saviour involves not merely an obligation to obey, but a power

infused, which enables us to obey. "He that abideth in me, and I in him," saith Christ, "bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." The Christian's graces are derived *from* Christ, and maintained *by* him. Before he was ingrafted into Christ, he was as the wild bramble or the degenerate vine; but when introduced into this gracious stem, he learns to yield the rose of Sharon and clusters of precious produce. Thus the Apostle speaks: "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God."

Therefore, the way to be holy, and bear fruits of holiness, is to live on the Saviour, and abide in him: and as the converse of this proposition, the way to abide in the Saviour, is to be holy, and abound in the works of holiness. "Hereby we know that we know him if we keep his commandments. Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. And he that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him."

4.—Lastly, it is by abiding in Christ, and by

the practical fruits which we have seen that this repose in him produces, that we are to be preserved in the comfortable assurance of that fellowship with the Father, of which, by faith in Christ, we are partakers. It is in vain for a man to profess fellowship with God, while he remains in sin. "If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth." The positive, practical appeal meets us at every turn: we cannot escape it. "Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." "Little children, let no man deceive you. He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous." "Hereby know we that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him." "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence before God."

II. And this brings me to the latter section of the text. The Apostle exhorts us to abide in Christ for this end, "that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." Here, my beloved, is the all-important plea for practical holi-

ness, and the point upon which all our pleadings for spiritual fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ turn. This is the test, to which all our profession at last must come. The object of all our preaching, and of all your attendance here, is explained in these few, but weighty and awful words—"that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming."

Oh! it is the all-momentous consideration *THIS—when he shall appear!* What is the value of mere theory, or mere profession; of formality or hypocrisy in the face of such a prospect? He shall appear. We are assured of this. "But who may abide the day of his coming, or who shall stand when he appeareth?" Will the tinsel bravery of a mere name, or an orthodox creed, then suffice us? Ah, no! "for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap." Every man's profession will be then brought to the crucible. Every man's conduct judged by an infallible standard. Every man's state investigated, and every man's portion eternally awarded. The enquiry will be simply as to the qualification for heavenly scenes: for this will

decide the character. The ungodly and unbelieving will go to *their own place*—the righteous will enter into the complete fruition of a fellowship, of which they have already known the earnest. “Then shall the sinners in Sion be afraid; and fearfulness shall surprise the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire: who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” “And it shall be said on that day, Lo! this is our God, we have waited for him. He will save us. This is the Lord, we have waited for him. We will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation.” “He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly—he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high. His place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure. Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty—they shall behold the land that is very far off. There the glorious God will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams, and the inhabitant shall

not say, I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity."

With this awful day of arbitrement before us, I bring these discourses to a close. My prayer and aim in them has been, to give such an exhibition of truth, as might leave no one hearer in doubt, as to his actual condition in the eyes of God. I have laboured to display the real nature of religion—to shew that it consists in such sympathy of heart with God as can only be effected by a change of nature, and must discover itself in the state of the affections, and in the outer walk. I have distinctly laid before you the only method, by which the awakened sinner may be introduced into this fellowship; and have enforced at length the appointed means by which, when once begun, the communion with God may be maintained. And, lastly, I have pointed to the end for which all this process is designed.

My beloved brethren, I would affectionately enquire, in conclusion, of each and all who are before me, how far they have been affected by my statements. Have your judgments approved them, and your hearts been impressed by



them? Have I been speaking to you of truths which you have yourselves experienced and enjoyed? Or are you still practically in ignorance of the fellowship which I have commended, and of the process by which it is to be attained? Can you say in the spirit and words of the Apostle, "Truly, my fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. Now am I of God, a son of God—I love him because he first loved me. Hereby know I that I dwell in him because he hath given me of his Spirit. I know that I have passed from death unto life because I love the brethren." And then as a proof of this love for the brethren,—“by this I know that I love the children of God, because I love God and keep his commandments.”

These are plain and searching questions :—but they are taken from that book by which we are to be judged at the last day. They imply an evangelic hope and Christian confidence, in him who can answer them in the affirmative. But they are the tests proposed by John for every Christian. We are not to evade them under a pretence of humility. I hold forth the

standard—I ask you to try yourself by it. I display the mirror—I bid you view yourself in its polished surface. I enquire, will your measure of faith and practice come up to that required by the Apostle? How, otherwise, can you have confidence so as not to be ashamed before Christ at his coming? Is there any presumption in accounting yourself a child of God, when, otherwise, you must be reckoned amongst those whose portion will be in the lake that burneth?

We have all of us, the most inconsiderate amongst us, some vague hopes of heaven. The vision of a happy eternity, sheds some few gleams across all our paths. We have none of us resignedly abandoned ourselves to a bleak and stormy future. We fancy that we have at least some plank, to which we may cling, amid the surges of the coming judgment. I would entreat you to bring your plea to the line and the plummet: for the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. Of such a judgment as some would propound to themselves,—in which, what they have done well will be set against what

they have done amiss, and the award will be pronounced as the balance is struck between them,—I find no vestige in holy writ. I can discover no title to heavenly scenes, but the righteousness of the surety and mediator, even Jesus, by faith imputed. I can discover no qualification for heavenly scenes, but the spiritual accordance of mind with God, which the Spirit of holiness accomplishes in the regenerated heart. Have you appropriated this righteousness? Have you realized this fellowship?—If not, your hope is based on delusion. It will not endure the trial. It will leave you naked, and defenceless, and in despair, in the coming judgment. You will have no plea wherewith to come before God,—no claim to urge with him. The words will die on your lips,—a burning shame will overwhelm you,—and you will be driven away from his presence into blackness and darkness for ever.

Why, then, turn unto him who sues you. “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return

unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

And you, my brethren, who have been already introduced into that fellowship which is to bless you, and qualify you for endless blessing; who have, in virtue of your union with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, promise both of the life that now is and of that which is to come,—in what words can I so appropriately dismiss you, as in the words of my text, "And now, little children, abide in him, that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." Amen and Amen.

THE END.



